EVANGELISM, RELUCTANCE AND FAITH DEVELOPMENT

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A Professional Project

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the Faculty of the

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the degree

Doctor of Ministry

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by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLE

ABSTRACT

This paper identifies a reluctance factor among main line church members who do not want to be involved in programs of evangelism. A questionnaire is used to find this reluctance among many people of the United Church of Christ. The history of the response of the UCC to the membership decline of the 1970's is reviewed from the perspective of one local church's response to denominational programs. The review shows the reluctance to get involved in new programs of evangelism. The reasons why point to a concern for differences of religious style.

The faith development theory of James Fowler is reviewed to probe for the deeper meaning of reluctance. The case of the religious pilgrimage of Sid Amos describes a transition from a conventional faith style to a reflective style. Persons like Sid show a reluctance to participate in faith styles they feel they have left behind. The similarity to the religious experience of Paul is discussed. Galatians is used as the Biblical source to discuss Paul's transition from a faith way of law to a new life in Christ. In faith development theory this was a transition from conventional to reflective faith style. This transition included both Paul's conversion and his vocational calling. He was reluctant to support his former faith style.

The conclusion of this paper draws on the implications of this reluctance and faith development theory for programs of evangelism. New strategies are suggested for reaching unchurched persons who have experienced a faith style transition. These kinds of strategies may bring a new definition of evangelism to main line churches. There is evidence

that there are potential candidates among the unchurched. Facing the reluctance may bring new energies for evangelism to the declining churches, as well as new members to their pews.

Chapter I

DILEMMA OF RELUCTANCE

During the 1970's Protestant Churches of the Reformation Heritage
in the United States showed a decline in their membership. This phenom-
enon has been documented by scholars who have provided ample discussion
and interpretation of the trend.[1] This information will not be repeated
here except to recognise that this membership decline is background for
this writing. The unprecedented membership decline was an embarrassment
which alarmed many denominational leaders who were faced with loss of
institutional strength, leadership morale, and financial support for
their programs. These leaders expressed concern for the decline by hold-
ing denominational strategy sessions and conferences on evangelism. The
declining membership pattern affected primarily those churches with
affiliation in the National Council of Churches, which shall be referred
to as the main line churches. Even after it was discovered that the mem-
bership decline had demographic characteristics related to the post war
"baby boom" and patterns of family life cycles[2] the concern of denomina-
tional leaders persisted. A variety of plans and projects were designed
to reverse this trend.

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[1]The best summary of this information is found in Dean R. Hoge
and David A. Roozen, Understanding Church Growth and Decline 1950-78
(New York: Pilgrim, 1979).

[2]This viewpoint was first encountered by this writer in Widick
Schroeder, "Age Cohorts, the Family Life Cycle, and Participation in the
Voluntary Church in America: Implications for Membership Patterns, 1950-
2000," Chicago Theological Seminary Register, LXV (Fall 1975).

These programs of response to membership decline constitute a second part
of the background for this writing.

It took some time for the implications of statistical membership
decline to soak into the minds of local church leaders. Meanwhile the
local churches had a noticeable loss of membership as the youth of the
"baby boom" generation, confirmed by the churches, moved on out into the
world. Concern for recruiting and church membership growth had been a
neglected emphasis during the decade of the 1960's when social concerns
led the church agenda. When denominational leaders began to respond to
this crisis of faith they asked departments of evangelism to produce pro-
posals and publications to stimulate a response within the churches.
Many of these programs were new approaches to evangelism and recruitment.
They were met by a general lack of enthusiasm by clergy and laity of the
local churches. There was confusion about language, theology, and style
of evangelism, and the methods to be used for membership recruitment.
This confusion was expressed as a reluctance on the part of local church
people to get involved in these new programs. A current dilemma in the
churches is this reluctance to get involved because of a confusion about
the language, theology, and methods of evangelism and membership recruit-
ment. This dilemma has been identified with the label "the reluctance
factor."

The purpose of this writing is to address the matter of the
reluctance factor with the following plan. The response of denomina-
tional leaders concerned about membership decline is examined from the
perspective of a local church. The reluctance is identified as a concern
for the style of faith. The matter of religious style is interpreted by

the theory which comes from James Fowler which is called faith development. The case of Sid Amos illustrates faith development theory and shows the transition from a conventional style of faith to a more reflective individualistic style of faith. Faith development theory is used to interpret the religious experience of Paul in order to discuss the issues of conversion and calling as part of a faith stage transition. These considerations suggest some new approaches to the reluctance factor and lead to some new strategies for membership recruitment.

The review of one denomination's program of response to membership decline is drawn from the United Church of Christ (UCC). Implications of this discussion may well apply to other denominations of the main line churches. Chapter II will describe the programs of the UCC as they were experiences by a local church. The churches of the UCC have a mixed history on matters of evangelism. They also have a language confusion centering in the word "Evangelical" which is a significant part of their history. The UCC programs tried to correct the confusion of language without much success. Many of today's members of the UCC responded negatively and they were reluctant to get involved in what others called evangelism. An opinion survey illustrates this response. Closer examination indicates that this reluctance factor is a negative response to the style of evangelism of other groups in the society.

The purpose of Chapter III is to examine the reluctance factor at a deeper level by the introduction of faith development theory. James Fowler has presented a theory describing the ways that persons grow up in religious experience and change their way of thinking about their faith.

These are described as "stages of faith."[3] Fowler's theory is based on
interviews and empirical data drawn from the standard practices of
research in developmental psychology. A summary description of these
stages and the transitions between them is presented in Chapter III.
Particular attention is paid to the transition between stages labeled
"Synthetic-Conventional" and "Individuative-Reflective" faith in Fowler's
plan. Faith development theory gives a clue to the nature of the reluc-
tance factor as a rejection of a former faith stage.

The case of Sid Amos illustrates this stage transition in Chap-
ter IV. The story of this modern individual tells of his move through
several local churches and four denominations. He made a transition
from a conservative, unreflective, conventional religious style to a more
individualistic, reflective way of expressing personal faith. This was a
move from a conservative fundamentalist church to a main line church
which did not use evangelistic appeals. A person like Sid in a main line
church strongly resists proposals that his local church adopt programs
which include a style of religion he left behind in his personal relig-
ious pilgrimage. The root of the reluctance factor is illustrated by the
faith stage change of Sid Amos.

Chapter V relates the faith stage theory to the faith transitions
recorded in the Scripture. James Fowler claims that faith development
theory has a universal application beyond this time in history and our
culture. This claim is tested by using faith development theory as a
framework to interpret the religious experience of Saul, who became Paul,

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[3]James W. Fowler, <u>Stages of Faith</u> (San Francisco: Harper & Row,
1981).

the Apostle of Jesus Christ. This Scripture study is confined to the evidence in Paul's letter to the Galatians. Since Reformation times it has been popular to speak of Paul's experience as a conversion from a religious way of works righteousness to a way called justification by faith. These views constitute a major part of the theology of Protestant Churches. Recently, scholars Betz and Stendahl have argued that Paul's experience was not so much a conversion as an experience of vocational calling to preach to the Gentiles. Faith development theory is used to test the proposition that Paul's experience was a stage transition which included both conversion and vocational calling. Evidence for this proposition is found in the letter to the Galatians.

The implications of this discussion for ministry in the churches is presented in Chapter VI. These implications come in two parts - one dealing with strategies and the other dealing with target populations. The strategies involve recognizing and overcoming the reluctance factor. This leads to comments about redefinition of the term evangelism. The teaching model for Christian Life which is recommended sees life as a pilgrimage which encourages growth and development and includes a variety of religious experiences. Local churches are encouraged to emphasize those parts of their own tradition which will attract persons in the faith stage transitions. Bible study can be a valuable tool when related to faith development interpretation. The second implication for ministry in the churches has to do with the persons who are in the target groups for membership recruitment by main line churches. Among these are the youth who have been reared in these churches, only to go out the exit door and not return, who may also be in a faith transition. Another

target group consists of those persons like Sid Amos who have rejected

their previous experience in conservative churches and are in a faith

stage transition. Evidence will be discussed which reports that many of

these persons can be found among the unchurched.

The conclusion recognizes that the viewpoint discussed here

applies not only to the United Church of Christ but to many other main

line churches. There is a reluctance factor in main line churches toward

programs of evangelism that is rooted in the faith stage of the person

expressing it. The understanding of this would help to clarify how to

reach people outside the church and encourage their personal faith pil-

grimage.

DEFINITIONS

The label main line churches is used for those churches of the

heritage of the Reformation which include: Congregational, Episcopalian,

Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Reformed.

> These churches stand in the heritage of the great Reformation
> tradition. For the most part they represent the established
> churches that have dominated religious life in American for the
> past three centures.[4]

This definition from Carl S. Dudley makes a comfortable distinction

which is helpful to the arguments presented here. The specific illus-

trations used in this paper have been taken from the United Church of

Christ. The argument will have application to the membership concerns

of all the main line churches, but will not apply equally across the

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[4]Carl S. Dudley, Where Have All Our People Gone? (New York:
Pilgrim Press, 1979) p. x.

range of any one of these denominations. The range of viewpoint, the sociological situation, and the theological views make each of these denominations very diverse. The argument used here will apply best in the local church situation which is more urban than rural, and in those churches which are more liberal than conservative in theology.

Evangelical is a confusing term in this context. Historian Martin Marty catalogues the history of Protestant experience using the term "evangelical" to refer to main stream Reformation Protestants. At the end of his historical work he concedes that there is another use of this term. "In recent decades one conservative party in almost all notable denominations has taken the adjective 'evangelical' to apply to itself."[5] The event that precipitated this trend was the formation of a group with distinctive doctrinal convictions which used the name National Association of Evangelicals. There has been considerable growth of this Association.[6] In the mid-1970's popular journalism discovered the "evangelical" segment of the United States population. With the election of Jimmy Carter as the President, the religious phrase "born again" became a media phrase and the "evangelicals" became a group which attracted political attention. The Gallup Poll in 1976 revealed the prevalence of this religious view by reporting that 50 million Americans claimed to have an "evangelical" view - having experienced a spiritual rebirth, through personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Conservative doctrine, personal

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[5]Martin Marty, The Righteous Empire (New York: Dial, 1970) p. iii.

[6]Russell Chandler, "Will Success Spoil the Evangelicals?" A.D., VII (September 1978) 34.

experience of salvation, and Biblical faith, constituted the mass media way of defining this viewpoint.[7] Those calling themselves "evangelical" include a much wider range of variation. Some are "New Evangelicals" who are deeply involved in social action concerns. Other "evangelicals" limit their public concerns to issues of personal morality and avoid social ethics. For the purpose of this paper the term evangelical will be used in this latter sense and not in Marty's historical view. We interpret the evangelicals to include in general those churches of conservative background who define themselves by fundamentalist theology, those which are members of the National Association of Evangelicals, those who call themselves "New Evangelicals," and the professional and media evangelists who use evangelical theology. These groups may not be coterminous but, in general, can be distinguished from the main line churches.

The word faith needs special clarification since it is used in the specific phrase faith development. In circles of religion and in everyday life, faith has a multiplicity of uses. The dictionary defines faith as "an allegiance to duty or a person...a system of religious beliefs."[8] We can speak of people who have faith in the rising of the sun, in other people, and in themselves. Some will reserve the word for relationships with diety. In religious circles faith can be understood as cognitive, referring to doctrine and creed, or as primarily affective,

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[7]Ibid.

[8]Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (Springfield: G. & C. Meriam, 1975) p. 412.

referring to religious experience. Fowler's work is based on psychological research and it deals with the common human characteristic rather than the theological interpretation of the word faith. Fowler describes "faith as an active or dynamic phenomenon, a stance, a way of giving form and coherence to life, including acts of knowing, constructing, composing, and apprehending of ultimate environment."[9] Such faith is the core element of one's character or personality, and it is a universal human experience. Such faith may or may not be expressly religious, and may or may not be Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, etc. in religious content. It is this common human faithing that is involved in faith development.

The word style will be used in the terms of the dictionary definition "to cause to conform to a customary style."[10] In speaking of a religious style we mean the customary and consistent mode of language, motivation, music, theology, and emphasis of a particular religious pattern, such as the style of a traveling evangelist. The word model in the dictionary definition is referring to "the system of postulates, data, and inferences presented as a mathematical description of an entity or state of affairs...."[11] This mathematical definition in recent years has taken on broader application to use that refers to nonmathematical systems. To speak of a faith development model would thus refer to the whole system advanced by Fowler, including the postulates, supporting data, arguments, stages, illustrations, etc. which make up the whole scheme.

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[9]James W. Fowler and Sam Keen, Life Maps (Waco: Word, 1978) p. 24.

[10]Webster, p. 1157.   [11]Ibid., p. 739.

PERSPECTIVE

It is important to state the perspective from which this is written. The writer is a pastor of a local United Church of Christ in a small midwestern city. He has more than thirty years of experience in churches, including organizing a new congregation during the expansive 1950's, and serving as a campus minister during the explosive 1960's. The occasion of this writing has been stimulated by the personal experience of membership loss in the church he serves. In searching for an appropriate response, the various denominational programs were tested on the congregation and community, and were discussed with the local congregation's Board of Membership. It was here that the reluctance factor was first identified. The purpose of this writing is part of a seeking for alternative ways to deal with membership recruitment. Faith development theory has given some clear clues to understanding the reluctance and using faith transitions to assist persons in their personal faith pilgrimage.

Chapter II

RESPONSES TO THE MEMBERSHIP LOSSES

PURPOSE

The purpose of Chapter II is to explore the response of the
United Church of Christ to the phenomenon of the membership decline.
There are some historical matters which show that UCC history has mixed
attitudes toward evangelism and the use of the term Evangelical. In the
1960's the UCC had been very busy and involved in a decade of activism
and the programs of evangelism and recruitment were neglected. During
this activist period the prophetic voice of Jeffrey Hadden had called
attention to future "trouble in the churches." When the denomination
began its delayed response to membership loss it was a call for "evangel-
ism of wholeness." Various voices reflected this new thinking: Alfred
Krass spoke of mission to America; Gabriel Fackre called for the churches
to "get the story straight;" the General Synod voted on emphasis on evan-
gelism. Responses among the UCC Churches to the Key 73 campaign of the
Evangelicals was mixed. Dean Kelly's book on why conservative churches
are growing brought guilt feelings and discouragement. This was balanced
by statistical reinterpretation by Widick Schroeder and others. A pro-
gram of Faith Explorations was launched to help UCC lay persons talk
about their faith, but many of the people were reluctant to become
involved in evangelism. The denominational leadership had been trying,
but the reluctant factor continued. The Chapter includes a report of an

opinion research project to determine how widespread is this reluctance factor in the UCC.

The account given here is not a complete story from the denomination's point of view, and it may be very inadequate as a representation of the United Church of Christ. It is a description of the way that the denomination's response looked to one local minister and the people of one local church. As others began to write about the membership decline, the leaders of this church realized that they too were caught up in the membership loss phenomenon. This caused puzzling and agonizing over the question of "Why?" The local church Board of Membership reviewed the programs that the denomination was offering. They looked at things other churches were doing. As they explored the whole dilemma, the statistical decline, the denomination's programs of response, they recognized the need for new strategies. But when they heard the call for evangelism from the denomination they were reluctant to get involved. In the survey that follows, the first person plural comments of this Chapter will be the expressions of response by this particular local church and its leader.

HISTORICAL PATTERNS

Response to the membership decline and a call for evangelism created a confusion in the United Church of Christ because of a mixed pattern of history in the denomination. Part of this history was a passing period of revivalism among the Congregational and Christian Churches. Another part was the use of the term "Evangelical" among the Evangelical and Reformed Churches.

Revivalism in Congregational Christian Churches

The history on the Congregational side of the Church included the story of Jonathan Edwards. Edwards was not only the first American theologian, but he was better known for his role in sparking New England's version of the First Great Awakening. This revival movement swept that region for a decade beginning in 1740. Revival meetings were common in Congregational Churches in the decades that followed, although the reports indicate that they were low key. The Congregational Yearbook of 1857 describes a report from Ohio:

> Continuous evening meetings...the preaching has been of a plain, practical character, holding up before the minds of attentive hearers the claims of God, and calling them to act accordingly. All excitement has been studiously avoided.[1]

This report shows a muting of the movement by the traditions of a more stable society. However, the pattern in other churches at that time did include "penticostal seasons, prayer meetings, preaching missions, conversions, reconciliations, and melenial expectations."[2] This individualistic emphasis on religious experience was the dominant temper of the American religious scene in that period and the Congregational Churches expressed it.

During the same period of history, the Christian Church was born as part of the movement of the Awakening of the frontier. This movement expressed itself in a spirit of democracy, individualism of private judgement, and liberty of conscience which broke ties with traditional European Churches. A flowing together of some diverse groups from New

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[1] Evangelism for a New Day, I (November 1973) p. 2.

England, Virginia, and Kentucky converged on a platform of Christian union. The educated leadership which inspired these churches stimulated interest in colleges, missionary work, and humanitarian causes. The tradition of annual revivals lingered on in some of these churches into the 20th century. A concern for union of all Christ's followers and democratic forms brought them together with the Congregationalists in a 1931 Union.

Four trends turned these Congregational-Christian Churches to other emphases than the personal salvation represented by the Awakenings. First of these was the Puritan rootage in Calvinism which was concerned for the whole society. This was a seed-bed for the abolitionist movement before the Civil War, and it continued with provisions for education of the freedmen after the Emancipation. A second trend was the rise of social prophets within the churches as they responded to the urban-industrial blight with advocacy of programs of social action. A third was the rise of liberal theology influenced by 20th century philosophy and science bringing a different assessment of human nature from the revivalist's model.

The fourth trend was concern for education expressed in denominational organizing of colleges, and local church organizing of Sunday Schools. The Sunday School movement had an original purpose of evangelization with emphasis on judgment and salvation. As this was adopted into these particular churches the content shifted away from the judgmental themes and focused on what was understood to be basic biblical teaching.

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[2]Ibid.

This became a tradition-based educational system.[3] The time came when Horace Bushnell's words were followed and "the child grew up a Christian and never knew himself to be otherwise."[4] Children and youth were nurtured in Christian families within the faith. The later Christian Education movement, in the 20th century, trained most new members for the churches in the Sunday School and in a Pastor's Class. It was expected that most new members would be reared within the churches and not converted, but only rounded up with recruitment drives called evangelism.

Evangelical and Reformed History

The German Reformed people who had settled in Pennsylvania and other nearby states did not get caught up in the individualistic emphasis which was expressed in the revivals of the Great Awakenings. They emphasized the importance of learning the Heidelburg Chatechism, and the focus on the Word and Sacrament in the life of the Church. Their ethnic tradition helped them to hold firm to this view although the first half of the 19th century brought confusion over revivalism. The Mercersburg Theology of John Nevin and Phillip Schaff strengthened this emphasis on the Chatechism and Reformation tradition. The young were raised within this tradition. New immigrants were won to it, and membership in the churches was by acceptance of the Confession.

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[3]Mary Elizabeth Moore, Education for Continuity and Change (Nashville: Abingdon, 1983) p. 34.

[4]Gaius G. Atkins and Fredrick L. Fagley, The History of American Congregationalism (Boston: Pilgrim, 1942) p. 175.

As a later migration of Germans came into the midwest they were organized into churches by missionaries from the Basel Mission. Men like Louis Nollau, George Wall, Johann Riess, who organized the Kirchenverein had a strong pietistic emphasis on the experience of salvation. Church life emphasized worship, sacraments, Christian nurture, and voluntary organizations for service. An anti-authoritarianism was expressed in "Liberty of conscience" and yet the Chatechism was used for instruction in the faith. "Creeds are testimonies, not tests, of the experience of faith," was a common saying. This made for a different emphasis than the eastern German Churches of the Reformed Church.[5]

The term "Evangelical" also contributes to the confusion in the denomination, for one of the constituent bodies was formerly named "The Evangelical Synod of North America." These people of the midwestern migration had come from The Evangelical Church of Germany which had its roots in the Prussian Church of the Union, attempting to bring together the Lutheran and Reformed people. The Evangelical Synod of North America embodied the meaning which Martin Marty uses as he describes main stream Reformation Protestants. Within the United Church of Christ the litera-ture will sometimes use this meaning and describe all the constituent parts of the denomination as "evangelical" because they proclaimed "the evangel, the good news."[6]

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[5]Louis Gunnemann, The Shaping of the United Church of Christ (New York: United Church, 1977) p. 188.

[6]To Walk Together, Filmstrip (Philadelphia: Stewardship Council, United Church of Christ, 1977).

As the United Church of Christ was formed in 1957 it brought into one denomination these traditions of the Congregational-Christian Churches and The Evangelical and Reformed Church. With this mixture of background and variety of viewpoint there was confusion over the word Evangelism, and with the normal differences between liberal and conservative theology we could predict that a program of evangelism would find a very mixed reception within the UCC.

THE DENOMINATION'S RESPONSE

Decade of Activism

During the 1960's the United Church of Christ was one of the main line churches which became very active in the cause of civil rights. The Congregational people have among them the heritage of the abolitionist movement which produced the American Missionary Association, founding schools for the freedmen. One of the remnants of these schools is a group of black churches making a solid minority in the denomination to help raise the sensitivity of the churches to the issues. This drew denominational energy away from the previous decade's church building and membership recruitment. One of the early warning signs of trouble in main line churches came from Jeffrey Hadden in 1969. Hadden was a sociological researcher who did an analysis of the attitudes of clergy and laity, and he detected a "gap" between them over the issue of social activism. He described this in The Gathering Storm in the Churches.

> ...Civil rights issue unleashed sources of latent conflict which
> have been gathering for more than a half century...the Protestant
> churches are involved in a deep entangling crises which in the

years ahead may seriously disrupt or alter the very nature of the church.[7]

Hadden said this raised issues about the meaning of the church, a struggle over authority, and a crisis of belief. Lay persons who did not approve of their leader's activism were threatening to withhold funds from denominational giving.

The stewardship departments of the main line churches responded to this warning message by conducting their own study. They wanted to check on whether or not there was a loss of funding because of objections to the national leadership activism. Douglas Johnson and George Cornell carried out this investigation and it was published under the title What North American Christians Think About the Church. The report indicates that 6% of those surveyed said that they might withhold funds, but the actual number that did so was much smaller. The vast majority of people found it objectionable, within the diversified unity of the church, to take financial reprisals because of individual reservations about isolated points of church program. This Stewardship study made note of the drift of membership away from the churches. The drift, which began to show up in 1969, was recorded in the statistics of the Yearbook of American Churches, a volume few local church people read. It was Johnson and Cornell who first called the attention of the average pastor to the phenomenon we have described as the main line church membership decline.[8]

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[7]Jeffrey K. Hadden, The Gathering Storm in the Churches (Garden City: Doubleday, 1969) p. 5.

[8]Douglas W. Johnson and George W. Cornell, What North American Christians Think About the Churches (New York: Friendship, 1972).

Call for Evangelism of Wholeness

Denominational leaders were more alert to the trends and more knowledgeable about the statistics. A small consultation on evangelism was sponsored by the UCC Board of Homeland Ministries in late 1971. Reporting on the event, Theodore Erickson noted the variety of definitions of evangelism within the UCC. He concluded that authentic evangelism would need to be developed from dialogue and consensus within the church. It would need to take into account the various consciousness movements, the liberation movements, and the views of those involved in social activism. He called for a "covenant renewal with concern for God's activity in the world," and a style of evangelism which would involve the total church.[9] After the same consultation the President of the church, Robert V. Moss, began to talk about the UCC being "immobilized by a faith crisis, and the relationship between faith and justice was the crux of it."[10] In the months that followed, literature in the UCC began to carry the "Faith Crisis" message. This message brought a lot of discussion to the grass roots level of the church.

The Voice of Alfred Krass

One of the early voices raised in the UCC in the concern for evangelism was that of Alfred Krass. Krass was brought onto the staff of

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[9]Theodore H. Erickson, "Evangelism: Search for Wholeness," Colloquy V:11 (December 1972) 21-24.

[10]Robert Moss, "Evangelism: Implications for the Church," Colloquy V:11 (December 1972) 25-27.

the Board for World Ministries in 1971 as a "Consultant in Evangelism" after he had spent eight and a half years in Ghana as a missionary. This action was taken because of a concern that the Mission Board program lacked an emphasis on the "proclaiming the gospel verbally and calling the people to discipleship." Krass began to talk about the United States as a mission field and attempted to stimulate the conscience of the churches to the need for evangelism. In 1973, the year the Evangelicals launched the Key 73 program, Krass was traveling among the churches calling for the UCC to "find our own method of evangelism...a full-orbed evangelism...we need clarity in freedom. I can't force my guest to eat, but I can give him my best."[11] He described the problem in the UCC as being the leadership in both the local church and the national agencies. He was referring to the reluctance factor.

Krass was correct about this matter. Krass was at a Seminar in Iowa in the year of 1973. Notes made at the time indicate that he made a good impression, as a man earnest about what he was trying to do, but few people were won to his ideas. At that time he seemed to be too Biblical, and to use a logic which was a deductive argument from the Scripture to the present. It was impossible to distinguish his voice from the Key 73 voices which the Evangelicals were raising in 1973. The reluctance factor was very much at work in the attitudes of many of the clergy who heard Krass, including this writer. Some of the lay representatives responded in the same negative way.

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[11]Alfred Krass, from personal notes on a speech.

However, it was Krass who led the way toward "finding our own method of evangelism." Under his leadership the Board of World Ministries adopted a new statement of position on Evangelism. Krass published his views in 1973 in a little book Beyond the Either/Or Church, attempting to stimulate the churches. In strong Biblical imagery, with commendable scholarship, Krass interpreted the times as "the world heading into unrest, violence, repression and suffering."[12] Evangelism must produce a truly new view of "God's Future." In 1978 Krass released Five Lanterns at Sundown, a scholarly examination of the issues of the world and its movements, an evangelism of culture. He called for a "saving," not out of the culture, but a conversion of new people into a new community which was moving toward the Kingdom.[13] In 1982 he followed these books with another which was to address the cultural diagnosis of "narcissism." Evangelism of Neo-Pagan North America called for a "Kingdom oriented evangelism."[14] The vision of the Kingdom was to bring hope, following Christ's example as servant, being in solidarity with the world. This kind of theology is clearly different from the theology found among the Evangelicals. It takes seriously the rise of liberation theology among the Third World Christians. It proved to be stimulating to the preachers who read and used it. But Krass continued to use the

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[12]Alfred Krass, Beyond the Either/Or Church (Nashville: Tidings, 1973).

[13]Alfred Krass, Five Lanterns at Sundown (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978).

[14]Alfred Krass, Evangelism of Neo-Pagan North America (Scottsdale: Herald, 1982).

traditional language for evangelism, and some of the standard passages of Scripture. Undoubtedly it made a great appeal to those of conservative viewpoint. They could find in Krass an able proponent who could be theological in a scholarly way. His communication still aroused negative responses from those of liberal theological views and stirred the reluctance factor in many others.

The Deering Conference

The developing response from the Board for Homeland Ministries involved another Conference in 1972. Convenors of the meeting described the UCC as having a faith crisis, involving not only loss of membership, but lack of commitment, a gap between the youth and adults, and an identity crisis. This Deering Conference produced a Statement of Commitment and materials which constituted a major denominational response to the membership situation. Recognizing the pluralism of the society, and the wide range of views in the church, it made an attempt to redefine evangelism. Using the theme, "Evangelism for a New Day," there was a call for a vision - "meaningful to all persons concerned for a world which embodies love, justice, salvation, and shalom."[15] This was a call for wholeness of vision for the world rather than for unity in tactics by the churches. Dr. Gabriel Fackre, one of the theologians advising the group, told them that the churches must "get the Story straight." The Story was described as the drama of God's creative action and dream for humans,

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[15]Francis Eastman and Theodore Erickson (eds.), "Evangelism For a New Day," Report on Deering Conference on Faith in its Corporate Expression (New York: UCC Board for Homeland Ministries, 1972).

marred by human refusal to heed. With the people of Israel God shared

the dream of Shalom, but even these people became killers of the dream.

In two short paragraphs the Biblical story was condensed into fresh lan-

guage.

> 'In Jesus Christ, the Man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Lord,
> He has come to us and shared our common lot.' In Him hope happens
> and shalom comes to be. The powers of evil met their match, mercy
> covers our guilt, and the future is opened. A new people is born
> to celebrate the deeds of God and to participate in the Spirit's
> ever-fresh stirring of liberation and reconciliation....
>
> Evangelism is the sharing of this tale of hope....As the word
> became flesh and dwelt among us, so an authentic human word about
> God must be embodied. More than word and deed, true Storytelling
> is word in deed speaking in the midst of doing. We testify to
> salvation not in tent or temple, but on the road of our own
> journeys toward freedom, justice, and peace. We believe in action
> evangelism, and seek to explore new ways and models of marrying
> word and deed.[16]

In the months that followed the reports of this Deering Confer-

ence, the literature inspired by it spread through the churches. A new

journal picked up the title, Evangelism for a New Day. An artistic ver-

sion of the Story was produced as a film in dance entitled Dawn People.

This effort was a sincere attempt to combine a theology of evangelism in

new language with a continuing emphasis on the social concerns which were

the agenda of the 1960's. Gabriel Fackre produced an extended theolog-

ical viewpoint in Do and Tell.[17] He later attempted to supply a "whol-

istic view of evangelism" in an expanded version on theological themes.

In Word in Deed Fackre used the imagery of The Story of The Storybook

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[16]Ibid.

[17]Gabriel Fackre, Do and Tell (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973).

(Scripture) by the Story Tellers (Churches) in Story Land (The World) of private and public experience.[18]

This redefinition was received with interest in the local churches. It was a noble effort to reformulate the old themes. The film Dawn People was shown to a gathering of the people of the congregation and they found it arty and interesting. They commented that even though the language was changed to the Story imagery, the program was still labeled "Evangelism." The pattern was the same: a proclaiming of "good news," with a call for "metanoi," a turning around with repentance, and entry into a new community. It stimulated discussion and stirred some feelings. But it did not seem to provide a way to get the message to those outside the churches. The "Story language" had to be explained. The people were still reluctant to tell the Story.

General Synod Responds

The growing concern for evangelism became expressed in resolutions which were presented to the General Synod of the UCC. These were refined by this representative legislative body, and a final version was passed in 1975. The diversity within the UCC precludes any one program from being used everywhere in the church, even if General Synod calls for this use. This diversity is not only in size of church, sociological situation, but also in educational, historic, ethnic and theological forms. The journal called Evangelism for a New Day invited local churches to turn in practical programs which they found to be working,

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[18]Gabriel Fackre, Word in Deed (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975).

and share these with others. The Homeland Board created a media and communication package called EVCOM. It dealt with the methods of advertising, using radio and TV, and general communication training. Local churches could determine their own style and emphasis and then use the methods of communication from EVCOM. The UCC also established a referral system for people on the move around the country. The United Church of Christ needed to keep up with its moving population, so a program was launched to organize new churches. Sociological analysis shows that growing denominations are those which are expanding the number of institutions. Many of these congregations of new initiative were to be in the Sun Belt where population expansion was taking place. Some were to be directed toward minority groups within the population. This called for new sources of funding, so the denomination launched a special financial appeal to support these new initiatives and education programs in methods of evangelism. Across the country the Conferences of the UCC established a variety of programs to help churches to make up their membership losses.

OTHER INFLUENCES

Response to Key 73

Key 73 was initiated by the cooperation of major persons in the Evangelical Churches as a major evangelistic effort. It was designed to Proclaim the Gospel to everyone in the North American continent in the year 1973. Participation by congregations and leaders of the UCC was left to individual churches. William Newman compiled information from

churches of the UCC, and found that responses were mixed. Comments from

various UCC Conferences included the following:

> A few were in on it....We have tried Faith Explorations with
> moderate success, and now look for a basis on which to face
> tensions between 'Conservative' and 'Liberal' churches.

> Ethnic churches, strongly fundamental, and main line churches did
> not participate...despite cooperation between some churches, old
> disputes were worsened, and the liberal - conservative split
> deepened in the community.

> Reports were very mixed... variety of local adaptations... in some
> cases cooperation...opening doors for specific projects, like
> canvasses, and Bible distribution....

> We're trying to reach a different constituency from the
> constituency appealed to by Key 73 and the 'evangelicals' and the
> results of the joint effort is that people confuse us with them,
> and if they want their kind of religion, they are usually already
> loyal in their hearts to them, and if they do try us out, they are
> disappointed. People are only confused by it....[19]

Note the considerable reluctance in this last comment!

In our small city we have a strong tradition for ecumenical coop-

eration of the main stream Protestants and Roman Catholics. The Evangel-

ical churches are not usually a part of it. When Key 73 was gathering

momentum it seemed to be an opportunity to work more closely with the

Evangelicals, and they seemed to be interested. A special joint commit-

tee was set up to do planning. Meetings were held to discuss plans.

Various proposals for cooperation were discussed: joint publicity, dis-

tribution of scripture, distribution of other literature, canvassing the

community, a possible outside speaker and series' of special meetings.

As the discussions became more specific there was disagreement over

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[19]"UCC Experience in Key '73," Evangelism for a New Day, II,
No. 4, (July 1974) p. 4.

literature to be used. Clearly the reluctance factor was at work, and
the conversations began to break down. Some of the main line churches
did participate in the eventual program in a limited way and only in the
distribution of the Good News version of the Scripture. In our UCC
church many of the people did not want to get involved in, or be identi-
fied with, the program of the Evangelical Churches. The reluctance fac-
tor was in us, and we declined the invitation to participate.

Dean Kelly Stirs Guilt

Nothing shook the main line churches to an awakening, as did Dean
Kelly's book on Why Conservative Churches are Growing. Kelly reported
not only the membership decline statistics, but the noticable growth of
membership in the conservative churches. This was clearly reported with
statistical charts and graphs. The picture seemed clear, that the main-
line churches, not only were failing to keep up with normal population
growth, but were losing membership. Kelly did not attribute this to the
unpopularity of social activism, as Jeffrey Hadden had suggested.
Instead, he suggested that it was because they were liberal in theology,
broadly accepting of diversity, and ecumenical. He argued that these
churches were not only dropping in membership, but they were dying. "As
the inner conviction of religious meaning ebbs away, its institutions
decline."[20]

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[20]Dean M. Kelly, Why Conservative Churches are Growing (New
York: Harper and Row, 1972) p. 55.

In establishing a rationale for his argument about the growing situation of the Conservative churches, Kelly looked into church history for examples of growth movements. He selected the Anabaptists and the Wesleyans as his model. Three traits of "strong" religious groups were selected - goals, controls, and communications. The controls he discovered were:

> Members would have such firm adherence to the group beliefs that they will be willing to suffer persecution and sacrifice possessions, safety and status for the organizations. There would be commitment on the part of members to solidarity, and willingness of members to submit to discipline of group leaders.[21]

Another trait of these growing groups was a missionary zeal and ability to communicate the good news to others in a winsome way. A third trait of the "strong" groups was the ability to maintain good internal communications for building group spirit and keeping up morale. Kelly concluded that the conservative churches were closer to these growth model practices. This growth he argued, was due to the need for structured lives by people who felt insecure, frightened, and not knowing what was expected of them. "We feel ourselves adrift in a shapeless, borderless, unpredictable world and we seek asylum from this intolerable condition."[22]

Kelly also defines another social weakness with a typology of denominations which he calls an "ecumenical gradient." The UCC shows up at the extreme ecumenical end of this scale of "Exclusivist-Ecumenical" gradient. These rankings were apparently subjective and not based on any empirical testing. This social weakness, according to Kelly, is characterized by leniency, indulgence, inertia, falling away of energy, concern

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[21]Ibid., p. 57.   [22]Ibid.

with peripheral social activism, and an expression of relativism and diversity which are involved in ecumenical relationships.[23] The UCC, formed by the ecumenical spirit, and dedicated to this emphasis in church life, was found guilty.

Kelly's book caused many of the UCC clergy who read it to take this matter seriously. There certainly must have been some angry responses as Kelly ranked high what UCC people rank low, and UCC people ranked high what Kelly ranked low. This book also caused many to take a better look at what was going on in their own communities. The conservative churches were growing. Southern Baptists, the fastest grow-ing denomination, were invading the North. On campus, the largest student gathering were those of Campus Crusade, and Bill Bright was mak-ing many followers of his "One Way." Denominational leaders then had to become concerned about the morale of main line churches and their leaders and began, in the UCC, to bring messages emphasizing "faithfulness." The debates that arose out of this helped to focus attention as many of the main line leaders and people began to ask themselves, "Why?" Perhaps this was part of Kelly's intention, and the long run effect may be bene-ficial. Further examination of the statistics show Kelly's interpreta-tion to be simplistic and distorted. His description of the strong points of the disciplined groups fit the cults better than they fit the denominations. It may never have occurred to him that the precise values of the disciplined group life which he elevates high may be the charac-teristics which drive many people out of the churches.

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[23]Ibid., p. 89.

A Balancing Statistical View

The load of guilt feelings induced by Kelly were lifted somewhat when main line ministers discovered a more accurate interpretation of the membership decline statistics. These were provided by Professor Widick Schroeder in a publication of the Chicago Theological Seminary Register.[24] Schroeder, a sociologist, set the background for the membership decline in the context of the population trends. He describes these trends as follows. Church membership in the country hit its peak in the 1950's when an estimated 60% of the adult population claimed to be members. This figure included as confirmed members many of the post World War II "Baby Boom" youth. In the decade of 1950-60 the "Baby Boom" youth constituted a bulge in the population graph making 34.7% of persons under the age of 20. Churches who count membership only from confirmation on, would have a great increase of members during that decade. In the next decade, 1960-70, the same section of the population, those under 20, fell to 11% of the population. It is reasonable to assume, that as the birth rate falls, so confirmation numbers will fall in the next decade. Part of the membership decline can thus be attributed to the declining birth rate, particularly among those denominations who base their membership on a system of rearing by nurture and tradition of their future membership group.

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[24]Widick Schroeder, "Age Cohorts, The Family Life Cycle, and Participation in the Voluntary Church in America: Implications for Membership Patterns, 1950-2000," Chicago Theological Seminary Register LXV (Fall 1975) 13-28.

Schroeder also points to a second sociological factor which is needed to understand the statistics of membership loss. He described the typical Protestant pattern of a life cycle in which there is participation in church through the growing-up years, Sunday School through Confirmation, then a drop of interest during the young-adult years, a return when new families are established, and a dropping out when the children leave the nest. He suggests that as the baby boom group became young adults, they began to move about the country, leaving the home community, and dropping out of church. Persons of this age are typically low participants in institutions, voluntary associations, and churches. "Since disafiliation is highest among young adults, these churches (who count only confirmed membership) had only five to seven years in which the full impact of expanded birth rate affected their membership statistics...."[25] Following the argument of the life cycle pattern, he also argues that there will be a future upturn of membership in main line churches as these young adults bring their children back for religious instruction, and this will occur in the 1980's.

What a different picture this presents! This means that the membership growth and decline matter is related to population trends, and is a demographic matter. This was good news to ministers who were endeavoring to be faithful, and it erased some of the guilt feelings. The more adequate interpretation of statistics did not alter the second part of Kelly's thesis – the conservative churches were growing. It did not

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[25]Ibid., p. 23.

remove the need for main line churches to examine their own recruiting of members. If our membership, having depended heavily on our own children, was declining because we were not raising as many, then what were we doing to recruit outsiders?

EXPLORING OUR OWN FAITH SITUATION

One of the themes of the denomination's response to the membership loss was called a "Faith Crisis." One of the programs developed to speak to this was called Faith Explorations, and it came from the Office of Church Life and Leadership. It was an exercise, or an intensive program, to help persons deal with their own personal faith. One version of it might be described as follows: A lay delegate from the church went to the Association meeting and was encouraged to participate in a small group exercise. The leader asked each member of the group to share with others the completed statement: "What I have faith in is...." Each person in turn shared their views. If the conversation went on long enough it might help a person gain the ability to verbalize viewpoints and experiences of their personal faith. This exercise attacked the prevailing attitude within the main line churches, at least the UCC, that "We don't talk to others about our personal faith." Is this attitude a middle class strategy to avoid arguments about religion? Is it a rejection of the Evangelical style of "giving your testimony?" Is it a coping device for living in a pluralistic world? Is it a resistance to being coerced by the question, "Are you saved?" Whatever the reasoning, the attitude is very common and persistant in main line churches where church people have not been taught to talk about their own personal faith story. In the UCC

churches the Faith Exploration program made an attempt to open up conver-
sations about one's own personal faith pilgrimage, but the reluctance fac-
tor persisted with many of these persons. These explorations were only
superficial for it takes more training and experience to be able to get
people to effectively verbalize about their faith.

Multi-Log

During the days of the 1970's when the Faith Explorations were
going on around the churches, we devised another exercise to help to do
this same thing - overcome the reluctance factor. The exercise was a
controlled discussion group technique entitled Multi-log.[26] Each person
was given a set of ten cards containing ten different statements of opin-
ion which reflected different attitudes toward evangelism. They were
instructed to read quickly through the cards, to select one which
expressed a view close to their own, and then, in turn, to tell members
of the group why they made the selection. Each comment was received with
appreciation before any general discussion was allowed. When the input
was completed the discussion was allowed to go where members of the group
willed it to go. The effect of the use of this procedure was to quickly
stimulate lively discussion on the topic. Testing this procedure found
that the use of the Multi-log group technique provoked quick discussion.
It changed few attitudes, but discussion of the attitudes of the people
about evangelism was helpful. The use of this exercise in meetings with

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[26]Edward K. Heininger, "Multi-Log," in Network Notebook, Acts
Evangelism (New York: UCC Board for Homeland Ministries, Fall 1976)
pp. 19-27.

people of other congregations suggested to us that the reluctance factor was a widespread attitude in the main line churches. Could this opinion be tested? How widespread was the reluctance in other churches of the denomination, and among other main line churches?

The Reputation of Evangelism

Investigation of how widespread was the reluctance factor began with conversations among the members of a Seminar on Evangelism held at the School of Theology in Claremont in the summer of 1980. The discussion led to the distribution of an opinion questionnaire to explore the matter. The subjects used were persons who were available: 1. Members of the Seminar on Evangelism; 2. Members of the Board of Membership of the local church in Iowa; and 3. A gathering of west coast clergy and laity from UCC churches. Opinions were from both clergy and laity, both men and women. The total number of persons was 52; 39 were UCC, 12 were Methodists, and 1 other denomination. Opinions were gathered by means of an open-ended written questionnaire (See Appendix I). Those who were polled were asked: "Among those people with whom you work in your church responsibility, who are the persons considered to be representatives of "evangelism?" Tabulation of the results is found in Table 1.

Table 1.

Percent of responses attributing the reputation
of evangelism to these persons.

Mass media personalities	56.4
Door to door callers	11.7
Conservatives & fundamentalists	14.1
Persons in my own church with responsibility for evangelism	17.6
	99.8

It is clear from these responses that the reputation of evangelism is shaped by those persons outside our denominations, and the major group is that of the mass media evangelists. Leaders of one's own church were recognized by only 17.6% of the responses as being the shapers of the meaning of evangelism's reputation. These responses seem to imply that the reluctance factor may be due to the association of the term evangelism with the reputation of persons of another religious style.

Specific responses to the open-ended questionnaire about the reputation of evangelism may help to clarify the meaning of the figures in Table 1. Some responders had positive comments about the reputation of evangelism.[27] Many responders had mixed opinions about evangelism's

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[27]Edward K. Heininger, reported in a paper for Seminar on Evangelism, School of Theology at Claremont, California, Summer 1980. Other views include: "It is varied. The majority of the congregation believe it is represented by the way of Billy Graham on TV." "Reputation was good, but not practiced by all." "In the large view, positive."

reputation.[28] By far the largest number of expressions were <u>negative,</u>
including such comments as: "A very poor reputation with my people.
Evangelism belongs to other people." "They dislike the money taken out
of the community by the mass media evangelists and the mass evangel-
ists."[29] The questionnaire also asked what difficulties arose as these
leaders attempted to talk about evangelism to their people. They
reported: "I received a lot of hostility, anger, and fear...." "There's
a constant problem of getting people in our kind of church to talk about
it and consider it a responsibility." "Everyone does not feel the
responsibility for evangelism...."[30]

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[28]Ibid., Other views include: "Ambivalent feelings by many.
Some think of the charismatic movement." "Some look back to other days
of church services and Sunday school which seemed to be more evangel-
istic." "The need for new handles, approaches and methods seems
apparent." "It is mixed...but an uncomfortable task of the church."

[29]Ibid. Other views include: "Evangelism is an intrusive
challenge to the comfortable <u>status quo</u> of the churches' family for
some. Evangelism programs are seen as imposed by higher up leaders and
not really owned by the local congregation...." "It is primarily a mean-
ing with Penticostal overtones, or charismatic, or negatively associated
with the electronic church." "Pushy, hard sell, self-righteous, money
oriented."

[30]Ibid. Other views include: "People come at me from negative
assumptions and what I say and who I am has difficulty coming out
without a lot of redefinition." "There is a constant problem getting
people in our kind of church to talk about it and consider it a
responsbility." "It is overwhelming for my lay people because they
feel they can't compete with the glossy practicioners of the media."
"Everyone does not feel the responsibility for evangelism, thus it is
hard to get anyone interested in a program of evangelism for the entire
church. It means a minimum responsibility for the laity, and a maximum
responsibility for the professional staff." "Among my secular friends
the new emphasis on the Christian Right only drives them still further
away from the church, and they would be offended by any kind of
evangelism."

The questionnaire of attitudes toward evangelism also asked what objections persons had to evangelism. Responses included the following: "I encounter resistance, no objections." "Objections are to the methods used by others, the theology of others, the guilt trip, and the anticipated response." "It simply belongs to some other part of the church, not the UCC."[31] It becomes clear from these comments that the reluctance factor is widespread in the main line churches, at least among UCC and Methodist people in California.

It appears from some of the comments that the word <u>evangelism</u> itself is part of the barrier. Should denominational leaders redefine this term for their people? Responders to the questionnaire also expressed opinions on this matter: Some said, "Don't use the word evangelism." Another said: "The legitimate concerns of traditional evangelism could perhaps be better expressed by a different word or groups of words."[32] The responses in the UCC of persons like Krass, Fackre, the

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[31]Ibid. Other views include: "Everybody agrees that we should love and preach the gospel, but only a small number are willing to do it." "I encounter objections to evangelistic services." "Indifference to personal evangelistic witness is shown by many because of a fear of failure and not knowing how to talk about the faith." "Our people do not agree with the evangelical diagnosis." "Some wonder why we should impose our faith on anyone. Some do not want to share their faith. It is a private matter." "People fear appearing arrogant and feel that what they believe is a private matter and don't want to push it on someone else." "It creates a problem of other people thinking you are trying to 'save' them." "People immediately think you are trying to convince them to change their beliefs because you have the only 'right' answer." Note the many indications of reluctance among these comments.

[32]Ibid. Other views include: "Why not avoid it and we can use another word without these complications, like - Christian outreach, or what else?"

Deering Covenant, and others had been trying to deal with this redefini-

tion. Have they accomplished what was necessary? The questionnaire

responses showed that the reputation of evangelism set by others was

still part of the reluctance factor. Other statements indicated that the

reluctance factor might be a matter of religious style, and not just the

reputation of evangelism. One responder wrote:

> Our congregation tries to maintain a non-stereotypical image...we
> struggle to discover a stance, a language of faith sharing. The
> discovery of meaning in our faith community must be shared
> authentically without adopting a "One Way" stance...faith as a
> journey of desperate persons.[33]

THE QUESTION OF STYLE

In the definitions for this paper the term religious style was

defined as the customary and consistent mode of language, motivation,

music, theology, and emphasis of a particular religious pattern. The

comments from the preceding questionnaire suggest that the reluctance

factor may be related not just to language, but to religious style. Two

illustrations from a local community help to illustrate the matter of

differences of style.

Door to Door Visiting

In a midwestern city of 50,000 there exists a strong tradition of

ecumenical cooperation between main line Protestants and Roman Catholic

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[33]Ibid. Other views include: "Our interests in the issues of
social concern and our lack of rigid belief systems is our strength for
those who associate with us. We should avoid competitive spirit - to
be as evangelical as others."

congregations. They meet regularly in an organization called Ecumenical Consultation. They had shared many excellent experiences of seasonal events, educational programs, cooperative social service, and even common worship on Sunday morning. The question of possible joint evangelism efforts had repeatedly come up for discussion, so a committee was appointed to design a plan for a door to door distribution of literature throughout the community. As the committee designed the folder to be distributed it became clear that no single design would satisfy all of the churches, so the message was reduced to a least common denominator: "We Care: We invite you to attend the church of your choice." Churches which participated in the distribution were listed by name and address. The Ecumenical Consultation has a policy that any local church may choose not to participate in any particular program if they do not agree with it. This action does not prejudice the participation in the Consultation and its monthly meetings. One prominent main line Protestant Church declined to participate in the literature distribution after a vigorous debate by the Church Board. It was much to the embarrassment of the paster who was the Chairman of the Consultation. When asked "Why?" the answer was, "They did not want to be associated with the style of house to house evangelistic groups."

In One Local Church

A second illustration helps to make clear that the question of style is involved in the reluctance factor. The growing concern about the loss of members led our church to turn its Membership Committee into a board with status equal to the other church boards, the Trustees,

Diaconate, and boards of Mission and Christian Education. This board reviewed all of the literature we have previously described as coming from the UCC and its agencies responsible for evangelism. Very little of it really seemed to get at the question of "How do we recruit new members for our church?" We tried some of Alfred Krass. Several board members read and we talked about Word in Deed evangelism. We showed the film Dawn People to a small audience, and discussed it. We used both the Multi-log and the Faith Development devices. Some of the discussions were more exciting than others, but nothing seemed to change very much. We reviewed the proposals for the UCC Identity program, but no one had much faith in the suggestions for advertizing. We have a sister church in town which had tried to do this for some time, with considerable expense and questionable results. Our building is highly visible, and people do come to our door as visitors. Our major task is to sort out the casual and curious persons from those with serious interest. We do not find it to be an efficient use of time to carry on an aggressive follow-up program. We are primarily interested in those who return on their own, and among them we find people who are anti-evangelical. A comment was put well from one of the members of our Membership Board; "I came to this church to get away from churches who are trying to coerce me."

Theological Debate

Nothing has been said to this point about the theological expressions of the reluctance factor which can be seen in liberal vs. conservative theological debates. This kind of debate has been going on for most

of the 20th century and continues to persist in the 1980's. We found

reference to it in the comments which came from the Key 73 responses:

..."tensions between 'Conservative' and 'Liberal'"..."the liberal-

conservative split which deepened"...etc. This debate also shows up in

the responses to the questionnaire on the Reputation of Evangelism. It

is found in the comments about language definition, references to "theol-

ogy of other," "the people thinking you are trying to 'save' them," and

"adopting a One Way stance." Other writers like Krass and Fackre have

attempted to deal with these theological matters. The viewpoint argued

in this paper is that there are matters other than theology which con-

tribute to the reluctance factor.

Theology is a product of the belief formulations of the human

mind. It is the rationale for the faith, and is the cognitive expression

of faith persons. But the faith of a person is always more than the

propositional statements of their expressions of belief. Faith also

includes the dimensions of emotions, ritual, ethics, community, and per-

sonal experience. Some of these dimensions never get expressed in belief

statements. Some religious controversy expressed in theological debate

may cover up these other facets of religious life. Thus distinctions of

religious experience, group style, and issues of power and authority may

be omitted from debates. The reluctance factor is not usually mentioned

or recognized in theological discussions. It is located in the deeper

level of experience related to the psychological development of personal

faith. In order to explore this, Chapter III turns to the current theory

of Faith Development as described by James Fowler.

Chapter III

FAITH DEVELOPMENT

PURPOSE

This chapter introduces the theory known as faith development so that it can be used as an analytical tool for further exploration of the reluctance factor. The theory which uses the label faith development comes from the recent writing of James Fowler. The background in developmental psychology and the research methods used by Fowler will be presented. The meaning of the word faith as used in faith development must be discussed. Fowler describes six stages or patterns of thinking which show up in his research of personal religious stories. These stages will be described in sufficient detail so that their characteristics can be used for later reference. In Fowler's writing these stages constitute a model - a system of postulates, data, and inferences which describe the changes of conceptual structure in a person's personal faith. Implications for the use of this theory will be discussed in the conclusion of the chapter.

BACKGROUND

Faith development theory comes to the church through the avenue of modern secular psychology and those thinkers who have contributed to what is known as Developmental Psychology. The viewpoint is rooted in the writing of Jean Piaget who did rigorous research on the cognitive development of children. Erik Erikson's description of stages of ego

development have become a common perspective in both secular and religious educational psychology. Lawrence Kohlberg's research on moral development and moral reasoning has informed the curriculum of churches and their teaching about moral development. The theory known as _faith development_ is based on the contributions to psychology which come from Piaget, Erikson, and Kohlberg.

Defining Faith

The word faith is part of the common language of the church and its Scripture so there is need to clarify the way this word is used in the discussion of faith development. Fowler associates the word faith with the action of persons rather than the statements of theologians or religious groups. By this definition, faith is "a universal...a feature of the living, acting, self-understanding of all human beings, whether they claim to be 'believers' or 'religious' or not."[1] In this sense he speaks of it not so much as a noun, but as a verb. It is not the content of their thinking or tradition which may be specifically Jewish or Christian, but it is their activity. Fowler writes:

> Faith is a coat against this nakedness (of the soul alone). For most of us, most of the time, faith functions so as to screen off the abyss of mystery that surrounds us. But we all at certain times call upon faith to provide nerve to stand in the presence of the abyss, naked, stripped of life supports, trusting only in the being, the mercy and the power of the Other in the darkness. Faith helps us form a dependable "life space," an ultimate environment.

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[1]James W. Fowler and Sam Keen, _Life Maps_ (Waco: Word, 1978) p. 18.

At a deeper level, faith undergirds us when our life space is punctured and collapses, when the felt reality of our ultimate environment proves to be less than ultimate.[2]

In this comment Fowler is talking of faith in the sense of a universal characteristic of human beings. It is a human activity expressing an all-encompassing way of relating to the world, other persons, and the Divine. It deals with the trust-distrust dimensions of experience and is expressed in attitudes, commitments and loyalties. Each person's own faith is unique. Religion consists of the accumulation of faith experiences passed on from one generation to another as a tradition. Faith is defined for us in this paper to mean this universal characteristic, that feature of human living, acting, and understanding which is possessed by all persons, whether or not it is expressed in traditional religious language.

Fowler also distinguishes faith from the belief content of religious traditions by using a distinction which he takes from Wilfred Cantwell Smith. "Faith is deeper, richer, more personal. It is engendered by a religious tradition, in some cases and to some degree by its doctrines; but it is the quality of the person and not the system."[3] "Belief" is understood to be the holding of certain ideas, and in the religious context arises out of the effort to translate experiences of and relation to transcendence in concepts and propositions.[4] Doctrines

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[2]James W. Fowler, Stages of Faith (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981) p. xii.

[3]Wilfred Cantrell Smith, The Meaning and End of Religion (New York: Macmillan, 1963) p. 12.

[4]Fowler, Stages, p. 11.

are the organizations of beliefs and belief systems shared in the traditions of the religious groups. The term "belief" will be used in this way in this paper.

The Method

Faith Development, as described by Fowler, is a theory about the way that persons change their faith style as they progress through childhood, youth, adulthood, and final years, and as their experiences of life deal with new problems and challenges. It is an elaborate and dynamic model of the complex patterns of human life that suggests six stage-like developmental styles of faith. These have been identified by Fowler through a method of interview research. "The empirical foundation of this theory rests upon 359 interviews that my associates and I have conducted in the years from 1972 - 1981."[5] In Stages of Faith, Fowler outlines the procedures used, the questions asked, and the framework of analysis used to classify responses. The subjects were asked a common set of questions about their life experience, relationships, and views on religion. The interviews were recorded and taped, and analyzed by persons trained to identify the stages of faith. The characteristics of the population sample reported approximately equal numbers of men and women who were interviewed in the Boston, Toronto, and Atlanta areas. Subjects represented a balance of age and included Protestant (45%), Catholic (36.5%), and Jew (11.2%), with a small sample of Orthodox (3.6%) and other orientations (3.6%).[6]

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[5]Ibid., p. 313.   [6]Ibid., Appendix B, p. 313.

The structure for the analysis consisted of rating persons on the basis of seven "aspects" which can be considered part of each stage pattern. These include: (a) Form of Logic, (b) Perspective Taking, (c) Form of Moral Judgment, (d) Bounds of Social Awareness, (e) Locus of Authority, (f) Form of World Coherence, and (g) Symbolic Function.[7] Three of these aspects are drawn from the previous research work by other investigators of development. The form of logic comes from Piaget. Perspective-taking comes from Selman. Form of moral judgment comes from Kohlberg. The other aspects are of Fowler's own design. The elaborate model that is thus produced forms a chart of characteristics that constitute the stages of faith development.[8]

DESCRIPTION OF FAITH STAGES

In the section that follows, a summary of Fowler's model of faith development is described in its six stages. The stages are given these labels: Stage 1 - Intuitive-Projective Faith; Stage 2 - Mythic-Literal Faith; Stage 3 - Synthetic-Conventional Faith; Stage 4 - Individuative-Reflective Faith; Stage 5 - Conjunctive Faith; and Stage 6 - Universalizing Faith.[9] A pre-stage is described as Undifferentiated Faith. The detailed description of characteristics of the stages follows.

Undifferentiated Faith

The faith development model is a framework for interpreting the

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[7]Ibid., p. 119.   [8]Ibid., p. 244.   [9]Ibid.

pilgrimage of religious life. The infant is in a pre-stage situation with an undifferentiated faith.

> In the pre-stage called Undifferentiated Faith the seeds of trust, courage, hope and love are fused in an undifferentiated way and contend with sensed threats of abandonment, inconsistencies and deprivations in an infant's environment.[10]

This is considered a pre-stage because the child has not gained cognitive structures and language skills. During the first months a child learns mastery of muscles, gains the upright position of a biped, and grows in ability to respond to surrounding persons. Early images are formed as awareness, memories of others, and the first self-knowing. The dependability of the human interaction and environment provide the basis for the "trust-distrust" in the first ego development stage described by Erikson.[11] Fowler describes the emergent strength of faith in this stage as "the fund of basic trust and the relationship of experience of mutuality with the ones providing primary love and care."[12] Trust, autonomy, hope, and courage may emerge through quality parental care and mutuality. Deficiency of care may lead to excessive narcissism or patterns of isolation and failure.

Stage 1 - Intuitive-Projective Faith

In the faith development scheme, Stage 1 covers approximately the years of three to seven. This is the age of fantasy when life is

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[10]Ibid., p. 121.

[11]Erik Erikson, Childhood and Society (New York: Norton, 1963) pp. 247-251.

[12]Fowler, Stages, p. 121.

experienced in episodic form and not yet held together by stable logical reasoning. "The gift or emergent strength of this stage is the birth of imagination, the ability to unify and grasp the experience-world in powerful images and as presented in stories that register the child's intuitive understanding and feelings toward the ultimate conditions of existence."[13] Faith heroes and heroines play an important part in the role identification as a child tries on behaviors and imitates significant adults. Stories, myths, and fairy tales are vehicles for providing the child with models of courage, virtue, goodness, and resourcefulness. These are tested in simple contests with "evil." A child will combine fragments, stories, and images into clusters of association dealing with God and the sacred. On the way to church for a baptism of little brother, a three-year-old will ask a question when told that this is the "Blessing of God" for little brother. "Who is God?" "Well, God is the Creator." "What is a Creator?" "The Creator is God who made little brother...." This involvement with institutions of religion can convey to a child a sense of being at home in a community of the faithful, or a sense of awe related to the feelings of "Hush" in the house of God. These experiences shape the beginning self-awareness of "Who are my people?" and "Who am I?" Fowler's researchers found that there are sufficient images in the culture by means of books and media, so that even the child who has no religious training, by the time of school age, will have constructed images of God.[14] Moral reasoning at this stage is based on responses to what the big people say and do, approve and disapprove,

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[13]Ibid., p. 134.   [14]Ibid., p. 129.

as experienced in reward and punishment. The sense of authority resides in the relationship of dependency of the child on adults, and is related to size, power, and visible symbols.

Stage 2 - Mythic-Literal Faith

By the time a child has moved into the age range of eight to twelve the thinking ability has changed. This accounts for the distinctive features of Stage 2. A ten year old mind is capable of both inductive and deductive reasoning. As this develops he or she can use reverse operations when objects or liquids are changed from one form to another. Use of imagination is the way of Stage 1, but the heart of the transition to Stage 2 is the child's growing concern to clarify what is real from what only seems to be. A ten year old can become an empiricist. Simple scientific identifications of the natural world can become his or her enthusiasm.

> During the Period of Concrete Operations, children discover how to organize and classify those objects and actions which can be seen, heard, tasted, felt, or otherwise experienced in concrete ways. Thus we talk about concrete operations. This is a time when what cannot be seen and proven is to be neither trusted nor believed.[15]

Mary Wilcox, in Developmental Journey characterizes this age person as "young bookkeeper."[16] The pages of the Guinness Book of World Records can be recited as evidence of truth, as can the pages of Scripture. This book-keeping function and truth seeking lends itself to literalism

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[15]Mary M. Wilcox, Developmental Journey (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979) p. 60.

[16]Ibid., p. 155.

as a faith style. If truth can be verified in a reference book, then the Bible is the reference book for religion. Beliefs can be interpreted literally as literal quotes of chapter and verse are the evidence. Symbols are understood as one-dimensional in this Stage 2, and will also be interpreted literally. Images of God commonly have an anthropomorphic form.

In Stage 2 the episodic characteristic of Stage 1 has given way to a narrative way of thinking. Narrative becomes the way for organizing the data of experience and episodes. Experiences are bound together by means of stories, which give them unity and value. These are more than symbolic and image, and are the way a child can conserve, communicate, and compare meanings. Fowler describes the change: "The new capacity or strength is the rise of narrative and the emergence of story, drama, and myth as ways of finding and giving coherence to experience."[17] With this kind of thinking a child can take on for himself or herself the beliefs, rituals, and observances of the faith group.

Morality in the Stage 2 person is legalistic and may take the form of reciprocity. God would send good fortune to the good people and bad fortune to the wicked. If you do wrong deliberately then you would most likely get punished.[18] Fairness is understood as an instrument of exchange, so the taking of turns is in order to get mine. Authority in the Stage 2 pattern resides in the incumbent of the authority position, marked by a visible symbol, such as the white coat, uniform, turned collar, badge, or emblem. The boundaries of social awareness in

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[17]Fowler, Stages, p. 149. [18]Ibid., p. 143.

Stage 2 are likely to be limited to "those like us" in terms of family, race, ethnic group, class, and religion.[19] All others are considered outsiders. To Fowler, Stage 2 faith is "the faith of the school child, though we sometimes find these structures dominant in adolescents and adults."[20] Carried into adulthood this kind of thinking is seen in the person who quotes the Scripture to define what is true. It is the contradictions to this kind of truth seeking which stimulates or precipitates a transition into the next stage of faith development.

Stage 3 - Synthetic-Conventional Faith

The rise of Stage 3 of faith development is normal in adolescence. It is at this age that youth gain what is called "formal operational logic." Persons in Stage 3 can reflect on their own thinking, test and verify hypotheses, and work with propositions and symbols which are manipulated to find solutions. The geometry class, algebra class, and science lab illustrate this. A person with this ability can step outside of the flow of life's stream and look at the whole stream. He or she can construct a hypothetical "Me I think they are looking at." This is a new kind of self-consciousness. With the burden of newly developing size and physical growth the "Who am I?" question comes to the fore in a new identity struggle. Fowler explains that: "The characteristic of 'taking up with a chum' of the same or opposite sex is due to the developing ability of 'mutual interpersonal perspective taking.'"[21]

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[19]Ibid., p. 244.   [20]Ibid., p. 149.   [21]Ibid., p. 155.

With this change to adolescent thinking the symbol of God under-
goes a reconceptualization. God may be reimaged as having an inexhaust-
able depth and as being capable of knowing personally the mysterious
depths of self and others that we will never know. Fowler comments:

> Literature about adolescent conversion can be illuminated by the
> recognition that the adolescent's religious hunger is for a God who
> knows, accepts, and confirms the self deeply, and who serves as an
> infinite guarantor of the self with its forming myth of personal
> identity and faith.[22]

Fifteen year old Linda, when interviewed, can say, "I just feel He's
there. There might not be any material proof but I know, I can bet my
life on it. I know because he has talked to me."[23] She explains that
"God talking" to her comes in the form of a feeling she gets when she
struggles with a problem, a feeling that God cares and that there is some
thing that she can do. Fowler suggests that the dominant images of God
in Linda's case come from the basic beliefs she has been taught and from
her feelings.[24]

The adolescent person's experience world now extends beyond
family to include work, school, peers, street society, media, and perhaps
religion. Faith must provide a coherent orientation in the midst of that
more complex and diverse range of involvements. Faith must synthesize
values, information, and must provide a basis for identity and outlook.
Faith style in Stage 3 is conformist in the sense that it is tuned in to
the expectations of others. At first it is conformity to parental expec-
tations, but this may shift to peers. Youth may try at times to hold
these two worlds apart. Some may be pleasing others to the point of

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[22]Ibid., p. 153.   [23]Ibid., p. 156.   [24]Ibid., p. 156.

experiencing what Sharon Parks calls "the tyranny of the they."[25] In this stage, authority is located external to the self, and it still resides in the incumbants of official positions. In religious life there is a strong need for fellowship and belonging groups. When there is no fellowship tie, and loneliness is experienced in a strange place, the offer of fellowship may be the opening door to a cult.

The Stage 3 orientation to persons of other groups is to see them as if they were merely aggregates of individuals. Social relationships are an extension of personal relations, so that the youth does not think of society as a network of laws, rules, roles, in systematically determined patterns. Other persons are known and evaluated in terms of their supposed personal qualities and inter-personal ways of relating. "Some of my best friends are X" is a Stage 3 expression, when "X" represents racial, ethnic, or religious groups. The person saying this is assimilating the friend by removing them from the social group from which they have come.[26] The boundaries of social awareness against those from outsider groups are still very strong at this stage and the phenomenon of prejudice is common.

A person in Stage 3 can be said to have an ideology, but beliefs and values are unexamined. Stage 3 persons can hold loose collections of opinions and convections which "make sense" and identify these with a community of people. Many of these may have been inherited from "our people." Thus the faith style is conventional, "like everybody else's" and also synthetic, "an unexamined viewpoint picked up from the group."[27]

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[25]Ibid., p. 154.   [26]Ibid., p. 162.   [27]Ibid., p. 167.

In terms of the ideology of religion, the person relies on the authority persons who are incumbents in the positions of authority in the religious group. What the preacher says is true, and what the priest says must be obeyed. "Much of the church and synagogue life in the country can be accurately described as dominantly Synthetic-Conventional,"[28] according to Fowler's assessment. Many of the subtle mechanisms of persuasion used in these institutions are an expression of this Stage 3 pattern: obeying leaders, committing yourself to this way, your duty is, leaders determine truth, etc. Reviewing the implications of his research Fowler also says, "A considerable number of the adults we have interviewed – both men and women – can best be described by the patterns of Stage 3 Synthetic-Conventional faith."[29]

As religious authorities manage their institutions and lead their followers with rules, observance, and authoritarian ways of Stage 3 there are some who question and doubt, and others who rebel. The questioning, doubting, and rebellion are part of the transition beyond Stage 3 toward Stage 4 in the faith development model.

Stage 4 – Individuative-Reflective Faith

A major experience that contributes to the Stage 3/Stage 4 transition is the experience of leaving home. This can be a geographical move from the environment of childhood, going into the military, going to college, or moving from town to city for work. The new environment provides the potential for an encounter with a new system of values, new

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[28]Ibid., p. 164.   [29]Ibid., p. 161.

life styles, and gives a person both the freedom and the burden of exploring new meanings. Previous identity has been shaped by membership in the face to face groups of family, school, peers, and neighborhood. The uprooting can be frightening. "Whether a person will _really_ move to an Individuative-Reflective stance depends to a critical degree on the character and quality of the ideologically composed groups bidding for one's joining."[30] Social fraternities and sororities of college can substitute for family groupings to express conventional ideology. Religious groups designed to provide a "home away from home" in the new environment can maintain the traditional faith system. Marriage can serve to create a new Synthetic-Conventional situation for those now playing adult roles but evading the challenge of the transition. Thus the choice of groups in the new environment, and the ideologies they share, become an important factor in whether or not a person makes a transition to Stage 4.

Successful transition requires an inner moving away from home. Fowler suggests that this involves two kinds of development and both of them are necessary for a full transition. The first kind involves breaking the reliance on external authorities, such as parents, peers, and significant others. "For a genuine move to Stage 4 there must occur an interruption of reliance on external sources of authority."[31] The second kind is the development of inner strength, ability to make decisions and, coping mechanisms which Fowler labels "The Executive Ego." This type ego developes when there is a critical distancing from previous assumed values and a new identity is shaped by the personal choice of values and

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[30]Ibid., p. 178.   [31]Ibid., p. 154.

life style. Some persons may go only part way, according to Fowler, and fail in one or the other of these kinds of development. For example, a person may move from their earlier value system into a world of pluralism adapting to it with the tolerance which says, "Everyone do their own thing." Such a person has failed to interrupt the reliance on authority of others. A second example is a person who may find a group shaping its own values and join the group, thus breaking with conventional authority. Such a person has failed to develop the ego strength which comes from reconstructing his or her own values. Both of these examples are persons blocked from a full transition which requires both the new Executive Ego and breaking the reliance on external authorities.[32]

Moving to Stage 4 requires that a person make a shift in locus of authority. This shift involves interruption of reliance on others as a source of authority and relocates the authority in the self, or the Executive Ego. Such a break may involve a burning of bridges and this requires an ego strength that some people do not have. The transition to Stage 4 is often a time of personal struggle, emotional upheaval, and turmoil. Fowler depicts the unavoidable dynamics:

> Individuality versus being defined by a group or group membership; subjectivity and the power of one's strongly felt but unexamined feelings versus objectivity and the requirement of critical reflection; self-fulfillment or self-actualization as a primary concern versus service to and being for others; the question of being committed to the relative versus the struggle with the possibility of an absolute.[33]

The period of upheaval may last five to seven years. A person may begin as early as the age of 17 or 18. If the transition comes in late

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[32]Ibid., p. 179. [33]Ibid., p. 182.

adolescense or young adulthood it comes easier than if a person makes this stage shift in their 30's or 40's. A significant number of adults seem to start into the transition, encounter the struggle, and withdraw to the safety of the familiar Stage 3.

Transition to Stage 4 involves some new ways of thinking. The college sophomore who won't go to church because "Church members are a bunch of hypocrites!" is applying criticism to the Synthetic-Conventional patterns of institutional religion. Contributing to this critical ability is a new style of logic, "dichotomizing," with an increased ability to use critical judgment. This involves looking at the assumptions of the value systems of one's own family, class, and religious tradition. Dichotomizing recognizes that people are shaped by social class. It tends to look at things with a sharp either/or perspective. It is able to take a system perspective as distinct from the Stage 3 orientation to the interpersonal perspective. Stage 4 thinks of the impersonal laws, rules and standards. Stage 4 students may attribute the evils of society to "the system" and the "industrial-military complex," and may overlook the evil and sinful behavior of individuals. Moral reasoning in Stage 4 may take the form of "reflective relativism." After some experience on campus and study of anthropology, a student might say, "All morals are culturally determined. They are not absolute, but relative ." Both Stage 3 and Stage 4 persons can be advocates of "Law and Order," but for different reasons. A Stage 3 person would base the view on assumptions about the legitimate authority of the society, and conformity to social expectations. A Stage 4 person might uphold the principle of Law as a

means of ordering society. Fowler calls this commitment to a principle as a guide to thinking, "class based universalism."[34]

As Stage 4 deals with symbols in a new way the mystical power of religious symbols is broken. Rituals which previously mediated the sacred are now questioned. Critical reflection separates the symbol from its meaning. If the symbol is meaningful, the meaning can be expressed in propositions, concepts and definitions. This process of thinking is encouraged when a person studies a subject from the perspective of scientific objectivity, cross cultural comparisons, or intense discussions with peers. Translating symbols into conceptual meanings can be described as "demythologizing." Some scholars "demythologize" the Scripture. For the Stage 3 person demythologizing is a threat to meaning because meaning and symbol are bound together and questioning of the symbol is an assault on the sacred. Stage 4 thinking can separate the meaning and the symbol, and can examine the symbol, even though the demythologizing may rob the tradition of its power.[35]

The transition to Stage 4 means that the locus of authority is moved from others to the self. A Stage 4 person hammers out his or her own world view and ideology. A new identity is constructed to frame the newly defined roles and relationships. Going back to home town and a visit with parents may make it clear that a Stage 4 person now lives in another world. The dichotomizing logic may lead a Stage 4 person to make sharp criticism of the views of others, rejecting previous views, showing disdain toward previous affiliations. The traditions of one's faith are

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[34]Ibid., p. 244.   [35]Ibid., p. 180.

reappraised or rejected. The struggle and personal conflicts that result may lead a person to change religious affiliation, or join the vast group of unchurched who respond, "I have my own beliefs." In either case, the Stage 4 person is saying, "I am my own religious authority and anything I find inconsistent with my new view of truth is rejected." The strength of Stage 4 is the capacity for critical reflection on self and background and outlook. The weakness of Stage 4 is the excessive dependence on the mind and the functions of critical reasoning. A person may cling to the Stage 4 perspective for the balance of his or her lifetime.[36]

There are elements of one's childish past, energies of a deeper self, and disturbing inner voices which may threaten the adequacy of the Stage 4 structured life. The passing of time, encounter with other perspectives, and disillusionment with failure and compromise may make a person realize that life is more complex and truth is more paradoxical. Another transition and rethinking can lead a person to Stage 5 faith.

Stage 5 - Conjunctive Faith

Before publishing Stages of Faith, James Fowler and his associates published Trajectories in Faith. In this book they used case studies of well known persons in biography to describe the application of faith development theory. These five persons were Malcolm X, Anne Hutchinson, Blaise Pascal, Ludvig Wittgenstein, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. It is interesting to note that not all these persons were Christian in the content of their faith. Malcolm X became a Black Muslim, and then a

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[36]Ibid., p. 181.

devotee to Islam. Wittgenstein rejected his Catholic childhood attach-
ments and became a secular philosopher.[37] This illustration raises the
questions about the universal application of faith development theory
beyond the categories and boundaries of culture, a matter that has not
yet been tested in research.[38] All five persons in these case studies
reach the Stage 5 of faith development which, at that point, Fowler was
calling "Paradoxical-Consolidative Faith.[39] In Stages of Faith he has
changed the label to Conjunctive Faith, and he suggests that it is more
complex and more difficult to describe than previous stages.

Stage 5 (Conjunctive Faith) may be a way of interpreting the
experiences that have sometimes been called "mid-life crises." External
factors which may encourage a transition from Stage 4 include such exper-
iences as failure, dissatisfaction with compromise, realization that time
is passing by, suffering, suffering of others, loss of loved ones, sig-
nificant encounter with the views of others of different background, or
the facing of one's own dying. A transition may involve a serious dis-
ruption of a personal life pattern in the case of some, as in the case
study that Fowler uses to illustrate the Stage, Miss T.[40] In other cases
the transition may be more of a slowly evolving change in the way of
thinking. The resulting faith stance is more mature. Fowler has

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[37]James W. Fowler, Robin W. Lovin, et al., Trajectories in
Faith (Nashville: Abingdon, 1980).

[38]Randall Furushima. Faith Development Theory, and a Cross
Cultural Research Project in Hawaii. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation,
Columbia University, 1983.

[39]Fowler, Trajectories, p. 29.   [40]Fowler, Stages, p. 188.

suggested that it never occurs before age 30, and many persons may never reach this Stage of Faith.[41]

Stage 5 exhibits a new kind of logic which moves beyond the dichotomizing style of logic in Stage 4. Stage 4 had hammered out an individualized world view, a dichotomizing and sometimes uncompromising view of truth. Years of experience and the problems of compromise may lead a person to recognize that there is truth in other views, "I don't have all the knowledge and wisdom." Conjunctive Faith involves going beyond the explicit ideological system and clear boundaries of identity that Stage 4 worked so hard to construct.[42] The logic of the new way of thinking is dialectic. It involves conceding that truth may be paradoxical in nature. This requires a knower who is capable of dialogue, instead of someone who has a firm grasp on truth. Stage 5 is an openness to the truths of the systems of other persons, not to deny one's own, but recognizing that in dialogue with others there is a correcting and augmenting, and a movement by both toward the real and the true. Fowler speaks of this as, "a dialogical knowing, a multiplex structure of the world invited to disclose itself...as an I-Thou relationship, with mutual speaking and hearing."[43]

Stage 5 makes a new use of symbols. While a Stage 4 person is analytical, separating the symbol from the meaning, putting meaning into conceptual forms, a Stage 5 person will reintegrate meaning and symbols. Such a change of thinking moves beyond the critical stance to recover the

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[41]Fowler, Life Maps, p. 80.   [42]Fowler, Stages, p. 186.

[43]Ibid., p. 185.

power of the emotional and mystical use of symbols. So a Stage 5 person
in mid-life might rediscover art as a vehicle of religious tradition
after a period of years of confining religious meaning to concepts. Con-
junctive Faith has experienced the breaking of symbols by critical
reflection, but now can discern the powerful residue of meaning that
escapes such reduction. "With its attention to the organic and intercon-
nected character of things, Stage 5 distrusts the separation of symbol
and symbolized, sensing that when we neutralize the initiative of the
symbolic we make a pale idol of any meaning we honor."[44]

A major thrust of Stage 5 is reintegration. A person moving into
this thinking may rediscover inner experiences which have been buried for
some years by the disciplines of adult striving. A middle-aged person,
in an encounter group, may rediscover some of his or her emotions, and
become aware again of bodily feelings that have been repressed in the
service of Stage 4 goals of career. "Conjunctive Faith involves the
integration into self and outlook much that was suppressed or unrecog-
nized in the interest of Stage 4 self-certainty and conscious cognitive
and affective adaptation to reality."[45] A strength of Stage 5 is its
"Ironic Imagination" which is the capacity to see one's own group of
meanings, while simultaneously recognizing that they are partial and dis-
torted apprehensions of transcendent reality.[46] Stage 5 can take a per-
spective beyond its own, and can interpret the world as multi-systemic,
beyond the norms of the person's own class, race, nation, and background.
This is a genuinely ecumenical view which can affirm the validity of the

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[44]Ibid., p. 187.   [45]Ibid., p. 197.   [46]Ibid., p. 198.

ministry of other's religious traditions, and still genuinely work for one's own.

The sense of authority in Stage 5 still resides in the judgment of the person with Conjunctive Faith, but he or she also recognizes the experience of others and has respect for their views. This may be what the classical thinkers have called the wisdom of maturity. It permits a person to spend energies on conserving what is best in the tradition. It also permits spending of effort on the activities which are generative, helping others to cultivate the possibilities of their own meanings. James Fowler suggests that the limits of Stage 5 lie in the sense that the stage is divided by the tension between the transforming vision and the untransformed world. "In some few cases this division yields to the call of the radical actualization that we call Stage 6."[47]

Stage 6 - Universalizing Faith

In the description of the preceding stages of faith development Fowler has had an empirical base in research interviews to support his model. Stage 6 is based largely on logical conjecture because Stage 6 persons are rare. Who would be considered examples of Stage 6? In his conjecture Fowler names Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Mother Teresa in her later years, Dag Hammarskjold, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Abraham Heschel, and Thomas Merton. Such persons "have the criteria of inclusiveness of community, of radical commitment to justice and love, and of selfless passion for a transformed world...made over not in their images, but in

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[47]Ibid., p. 198.

accordance with an intentionality both divine and transcendent."[48] The
language and symbolism Fowler uses to get at this description is borrowed
from theology and uses the symbol of "Kingdom of God." The theological
views of Richard Neibuhr are used to help to convey this difficult mat-
ter. In terms of description, Fowler summarizes:

> The persons best described by it have generated faith compositions
> in which their felt sense of an ultimate environment is inclusive
> of all being....They are contageous in the sense that they create
> zones of liberation from the social, political, economic, and
> ideological shackles we place and endure on human futurity....Uni-
> versalizers are often experienced as subversive of the structures...
> and many persons in this stage die at the hands of those whom they
> hope to change...they have a special grace that makes them seem more
> more lucid, more simple, and yet somehow more fully human than the
> rest of us.[49]

Stage 6 does not mean to be perfect in a moral, psychological, or leader-
ship sense. Fowler does not believe these persons set out to "be a
saint." Stage 6 comes to those persons who embody Universalizing faith
by being drawn into commitments and leadership by the providence of God
and the exigencies of history.[50]

Conclusions

In describing this model of faith development, James Fowler has
not given neat and easy labels to the stages. This is to help guard
against the easy and oversimplified labeling of persons. Mary Wilcox

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[48]Ibid., p. 201.

[49]Fowler, "Perspectives on the Family from the Standpoint of Faith
Development Theory," The Perkins Journal XXXIII, 1 (Fall, 1979)
pp. 13-14.

[50]Fowler, Stages, p. 202.

makes a good statement about this problem:

> We need to be particularly attentive that we do not oversimplify nor make snap impressionistic judgments in using these theories, thereby doing great injustice to both the theories and to individual persons. A developmental model can give us clues about human potential and ways of facilitating its achievement. It can provide a basis for more effective relationships...but its responsible use does not permit labeling or trying to mold persons to fit into the contours of the model.[51]

The faith development model is not a ladder for measuring the progress of an enterprising religionist who is striving for perfection or for sanctification. The theorists suggest, in general, that some persons move faster through the stages than others. As we have noted, some persons are content with the stage they are in and back away from the struggle to move toward another. It appears that individuals seem to do most of their reasoning in one stage, or in two adjacent stages. Persons seem to prefer the highest stage they can understand and usually they cannot comprehend the reasoning more than one stage above their own.[52]

The value of the model of faith development is that it gives us an analytic structure to help us to understand what is happening as persons describe their religious experience and thinking. In the next Chapter we apply this analysis to the Case of Sid Amos. We will make a special focus on the transition from Stage 3 (Synthetic-Conventional faith) to Stage 4 (Individuative-Reflective faith). It is in this transition that we discover clues to the reluctance factor.

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[51]Wilcox, p. 92. [52]Ibid., p. 80.

Chapter IV

THE CASE OF SID AMOS

The purpose of this chapter is to apply faith development theory
to the case of one person's faith story and show how it is related to the
reluctance factor. The case will be the true story of Sid Amos.[1] In his
religious pilgrimage Sid Amos made several changes of church affiliation
and a major shift of religious thinking. The details of this story were
recorded by tape recorder and are described in an interview. The changes
are identified in an interpretation as a faith stage transition from
Stage 3 to Stage 4. The conclusion suggests a new interpretation of the
reluctance factor as the rejection of a previous faith stage and style.
The reluctance factor in the case of Sid Amos was his refusal to get
involved in the religious viewpoint and style that he had left behind.

The method used to gather this material was to tape record the
responses to a set of questions. The chapter will present the case as an
interview presented verbatim and then in the next section will do an
analysis of the case using faith development theory. The names of all
persons have been changed to preserve anonymity.[2] The churches mentioned
have been labeled with a simple system to disguise identity and keep the

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[1]Sid Amos has read this chapter and has given permission for it to
be recorded in this form.

[2]All names of persons and places mentioned have been changed, as
have the names of religious movements and ministries.

reader's focus on the style of religious life.[3] Numbers in the paren-
theses are used to help identify points made in the interpretation.[4]

THE STORY OF SID AMOS

A minister stopped for a visit one evening at the trailer home of
a quiet young man in his early thirties. Sid Amos had been singing in
the church choir of Tenth Church for several months. He had left a posi-
tion as the choir director of another church to come and sing in Tenth
Church, because, "We like your church." This choir director job had been
out of town and the church experience there had not been a pleasant one.
The occasion of the minister's visit was to discuss the baptism of a
child. Some months earlier, Sid's wife, Bell, had sought the minister's
help in the form of a letter of recommendation to an adoption agency.
The couple already had one adopted daughter of foreign ancestry, and
sought another. The letter was written. The second daughter had now
arrived.

As the conversation began Sid indicated that they wanted to join
Tenth Church. They also wanted to have both the girls baptized according
to the custom of Tenth Church, which was a baptism of children by

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[3]The denominations involved in the story have been designated
with Greek letters: Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta, etc. The local churches
involved in the story have been designated with serial numbers, e.g.,
First, Second, Third, in the order of Sid's involvement in them.

[4]The story is written in an interview format. The numerals in
parentheses at the end of each passage are reference points to aid in
referring back to particular statements in the discussion and
commentary which follow.

sprinkling. When the conversation turned to the meaning of baptism, Sid and Bell indicated that their original church background was in a religious tradition which baptized believers only. This was in another part of the country. They reported that they had a significant change of thinking about this matter. Sid disclosed the story of a religious pilgrimage which involved moving from a very conservative church tradition. "I began as a rigid closed-minded fundamentalist, and finally rejected it completely," he said. One phase of this story involved spending a summer in the camp of a campus fellowship and ending the summer with a nervous breakdown. Sid had slowly rejected the religious background from which he came. This involved moving from church to church and it required a long struggle to revise religious thinking. Sid and Bell now felt comfortable in Tenth Church. The request to baptize the girls was a symbol of a major religious change.

Sid's story was told briefly that night. At a later time he agreed to provide more detail as he began to understand his experience when interpreted by faith development. Sid's taped responses to interview questions are presented here to give further detail to this story.

THE INTERVIEW

INTERVIEWER: Would you describe your participation in a local church at the age of thirteen?

AMOS: I was involved every day...every time the doors of the church were open. I was there for Sunday morning Sunday School and Service on Sundays. I was there in the evenings for the Endeavor, and the evening service.[1] After I was fourteen, I was involved in the teenage activities of the church, which means that I was staying for the Fellowship Hour after Sunday service. So on Sundays I was probably spending six to eight hours in the church.

INTERVIEWER: Did you continue with that much involvement?

AMOS: Then on Wednesday nights there was prayer meeting around seven o'clock, and after that there was the weekly choir rehearsal. I was in the choir most of the time I was in high school. So on Wednesday I was spending two to three hours.[3]

Any time there was something special, I was there. I was at all the revivals. Those usually lasted a week. If there were any special observances - get togethers, fellowships, parties, services, whatever, during the week - I was there. This was a small town I was living in and there wasn't a whole lot for the kids to do. I was very heavy into the church, into religious activities.[5] It was not only important to me religiously, it was important to me socially, and as recreation.

INTERVIEWER: What was the shape of your parents' religious involvement?

AMOS: Mother was the main religious influence on me when I was a child. She was a very devout member of the Alpha denomination at that point. She believed in going every time the church doors were open.[6] Some of my earliest memories were of going to the Alpha Church. As I remember her teachings, they were very traditional Alpha, and very emotional Alpha.

Father's religious participation was...a bit more complex. He grew up in the Beta denomination. His mother was a devout person, and his father was much more luke warm. My father went through a long period of being out of the church, of being disaffected, and from what I could tell, of being a "good old boy" - drinking, carousing, carrying on, and just generally disconnected from anything having to do with religion. When I was ten or twelve, he became active again, and went back to the Beta kind of church. He and mother did not see eye to eye on religion, and there was not a whole lot of religious harmony in our home. I used to think that his beliefs were pretty traditional for someone in a Beta Church, but I found out when I grew up that he didn't agree with them on quite a number of things. But he kept that pretty well to himself...[19] while he actively participated in that church. But my Dad didn't have a whole lot of influence on me religiously when I was a kid.[11] I thought the Beta Church was pretty odd...their worship was different than I was used to. Their attitudes were very negative and legalistic and so on. I was totally turned off, being musically oriented, by a church in which the hymn singing was as phoney as a room full of angry cats.

INTERVIEWER: Your church tradition anticipates a conversion and baptism of a person as believer. How old were you when you were baptized?

AMOS: I remember "going down the aisle," as the saying was, when I was about six or seven...this was during a revival. I remember that as an emotional experience...a lot of crying on my part, and on my mother's part. I was baptized at that time, by total immersion, of course.[9] I remember realizing in later years, that I really didn't know what I was doing. I think it was mainly because it was expected.[8] I seem to remember being scared to death that I wasn't going to go to heaven...that I wasn't going to be part of this group[10]...that it was just going to be terrible if I wasn't going to accept Jesus as my Lord and Savior. I don't remember it as being joyful or a positive experience.

INTERVIEWER: In what ways did your adolescent experience fulfill the expectations of the church group?

AMOS: I was in the fellowships, went on all the hayrides, picnics, early morning experiences, special evening services. I was just totally involved in the youth group of First Church.[7]

INTERVIEWER: What did you think of other people who were not from First Church?

AMOS: I was scared of them and distrusted them; there was just that sneaking suspicion that they would lead you astray from the true church[12]...to perdition, if you had anything much to do with them. I was nervous in dealing with people of other persuasions and I didn't quite trust them. I was afraid they were going to pollute my thinking... and lead me astray.[13] I guess I was afraid I was not strong enough to stand up for what was right and true. I was probably afraid to deal with beliefs of other churches because I was afraid that I would find out that I didn't have all the answers, and that the answers I had weren't all right, and that would just shatter me and I would be left with nothing.

INTERVIEWER: What happened when you went to college and got involved in the Campus Fellowship?

AMOS: My sophomore year a Campus Fellowship representative moved into town and spoke at the Alpha student group.[14] He began holding prayer meetings and a number of us got involved in those. I don't even remember the sequence by which I wound up going to that Campus Fellowship campground...but I joined the camp staff for the summer.

INTERVIEWER: What was the summer experience like?

AMOS: My irritation gradually developed over that summer. I went along with everything they were putting out, teaching, and

asking of me. I worked long hours as a dishwasher, then going
to all their meetings, and going to the City to witness on the
street corners. The thing that grew on me, as I became more
fatigued, more jaundiced about the whole thing, was that it was
all so smug and pat. They had everything worked out to the
smallest detail. They had a manual about as thick as a
dictionary, taller and wider than the best dictionary...filled
with rules and regulations about how to do everything - how to
run your Fellowship, how to witness, how to dress, how to
think, how to act, how to talk. Everything was laid down by
the Director! I finally came to see that they felt they had
all the answers, and there was no other way than their way.
There was no freedom whatsoever. You had to think exactly the
way they thought, and accept the way they thought about the
Bible, about Jesus Christ, about religion, and so on, or you
were marked "Lousy!" So I just finally became turned off![15]

INTERVIEWER: Was this hard on you?

AMOS: I had to go through total exhaustion and had thrown myself
into clinical depression. I just had a total breakdown at the
end of the summer. I really didn't know what was going on.[16]

INTERVIEWER: Who did you find helpful after this experience?

AMOS: I would suppose you would say, myself and Bell. I didn't
feel I could talk to my parents about what I was going through.
They didn't understand it, and didn't know how to help.[17] I
didn't feel I could talk to the Alpha fellowship director,
because he was a very uptight sort of person. Bell didn't
realize what was going on, but she hung in there and stuck by me
and helped me in every way she could. For several months I
pretty well dropped out of everything. I gave up the office I'd
been elected to the year before, and pretty well quit going to
church...just dropped out of everything for some time.[23]
Even though I was confused as all get out, with Bell's help,
doing some thinking, doing some reading, I gradually pulled out
of it by myself.[20]

INTERVIEWER: Were you ever tempted to rebel strongly against
religion?

AMOS: Yes, many times I angrily wanted to turn my back on religion
entirely because it seemed too confusing. Rebel against the
church, yes. Morally, no! I was very lucky to be happily
married at the end of my Junior year. My wife was the support,
the one who shored me up, the one who encouraged me and kept me
going, listened sympathetically, and always there to help,
empathize and comiserate. She has always been able to listen,
and has been strong, stable, thoughtful. She has given me room
to think through all these things.[21]

INTERVIEWER: What were the resources that guided you?

AMOS: I think I gradually rationalized the experience for myself. I know my ideas were changing at that time. I was all wrapped up in trying to come back from that experience of depression, involved in trying to complete my schoolwork. Even though I was having terrible problems with doubt and depression, I don't remember doing a lot of studying of religious questions at that point.[23]

INTERVIEWER: What was your situation at the end of your senior year?

AMOS: We went to church off and on but had become disgruntled with the Alpha kind of Church. I remember a few of the ideas tossed out by the pastor of Third Church but I really don't remember any resources that I found to guide me at that point. We were getting ready to find teaching jobs and move.[23] We had become disgruntled with the Alpha church, because I felt that we no longer fit there, because I could no longer accept the doctrinal assertions any more....I had been holding onto these all the way through Junior and Senior High and half my college experience. The depression situation speeded up the disillusion with these traditional ideas because I found that they didn't help me.[26] By the end of my senior year I was actively searching for something else.[25]

INTERVIEWER: Did you get involved in a church in the community of your first job?

AMOS: Here we finally see an improvement and turn for the better. We were still going to an Alpha Church, Third Church. I did sing with the choir some, and we went to Sunday School class, and we were periodic in our attendance. Our doctor was in that church, a marvelous and thoughtful man, and I had some good conversations with him concerning beliefs, but we were never satisfied.[27] The second year we had the same jobs, but moved to a different town, and decided it was definitely time to make a change. We tried Fourth Church, a Alpha type, but it was too reactionary. So we finally decided to convert to the Gamma Church there.[28] The minister was a marvelous, highly educated, thoughtful man. He had a lot of sense when it came to religious confusion. He gave me some very good guidance. We were regular that year in Fifth Church and were much better satisfied. When we talked with the minister about our doubts, confusion, fears, and so on, he took it as something that was natural, inevitable, and a growing thing. He was not intimidated by it at all, as the Alpha people were who condemned us for doubting, questioning, and all.[30] We asked him if we with our doubts, confusion, and lack of traditional beliefs, could be Gammas? His response was that Gammas can believe just about anything they want to believe.[32]

INTERVIEWER: When you left to go east, what did you do about church life?

AMOS: We were Gammas at the time and satisfied with the services and doctrine of the Gamma Church.[33] But we were so busy getting involved in teaching, going to school, starting a new household, that we were not involved much in Sixth Church. I learned then that Seventh Church was looking for a choir director, so I applied, and got it. For the next couple of years I was director at that Seventh Church, a Gamma Church. I tried taking charge of a youth group, but didn't like that.

INTERVIEWER: What preachers or leaders were most helpful to your recovery?

AMOS: The minister of Fifth Church had a very strong influence on me. After we got to the east, the minister of Eighth Church influenced me...a marvelous man and a marvelous speaker. I am sorry to say that the ministers in the other churches where I acted as choir director didn't really have much influence because they were not very good speakers and not deep thinkers by any means. I am not claiming to be a deep thinker, but their thought and sermons were pretty pedestrian.

INTERVIEWER: What about books that helped you in your years of questioning?

AMOS: In the east, three writers had very strong influence. One was Harry Emerson Fosdick. I read several of his books, and was strongly influenced by his thinking and writing, getting quite a number of things clarified. For instance, that you don't have to be a fundamentalist, or a conservative to believe in God and to believe in Jesus Christ. You don't have to believe in the traditional conservative beliefs...in the virgin birth...and you can still be a Christian.[34] There was a good book entitled What's Left to Believe; I don't know who wrote it, and that was very influential because it addressed exactly what was bothering me at the time.

Secondly, while at Ninth Church, I read large chunks of The Interpreter's Bible. I would check out various volumns from the church library and read sections that interested me.[35] In more recent years, my thinking has been influenced by secular writers or psychologists who combine secular and religious thought - Transactional Analysis, How to Win Friends and Influence People, Rational Emotive Therapy, Cognitive Therapy, Feeling Good, and Pop Psychology. The most recent book has been Leslie Weatherhead's The Christian Agnostic. This book has had more impact on me than anything else in recent years because it sort of sums up the thinking of a person who has moved from a very traditional belief to a quite non-traditional belief.[36]

INTERVIEWER: Did you find yourself in tension between your personal religiousness and participation in the church?

AMOS: Yes, I found tension of different sorts ever since breaking with the Alpha Church. I have vacilated between believing that the organized church isn't necessary and believing that it is still quite necessary. At the moment I feel that it is necessary, that the corporate worship is important, that meeting with like-minded people is important, that having emotional and psychological, and spiritual contacts with like-minded people is important.

INTERVIEWER: What attracted you to Tenth Church (where he was now asking for baptism of the children)?

AMOS: We were attracted by the sense of community, the sense of openness, the fellowship, camaraderie, togetherness in Christ. There is a good ambience in that church. We were attracted by the minister's open-mindedness and intelligence. We were attracted by the choir. We were attracted by the air of tolerance. That had become very important to us, that a church be willing to tolerate our individuality.[37] We are not by any means heretics, but we are quietly independent in our faith. But we do not like a church that we feel tries to force us into a particular mold.[38] Tenth Church does not do that...

INTERVIEWER: How would you want to state your beliefs now?

AMOS: I think that my Credo is, or has to be, a very independent or individual thing now, and that I have a perfect right to disbelieve any part of the traditional creeds that I choose.[39] I think now that participation in the church is very important to me and my family because of the stimulation that it brings to thought and action. But there is still a tension between my personal religious beliefs and the traditional beliefs of Protestant Churches.[40]

The Amos girls were baptized in Tenth Church.[41] After some months another job change took Sid, Bell, Heidi, and Terri back to the same part of the country where they formerly lived. They did not go back into an Alpha Church. Sid did some choir directing in a Delta Church, but on last report was giving that up. The Amoses were last known to be looking into another church, an open-minded one, with educated people. Sid commented, "I am still very definitely in the process of becoming, a

process of pilgrimage, of learning and changing, and refining of ideas, of finding my way, and I still believe very strongly in Christ and God..."

INTERPRETATION

What was the nature of the religious struggle of Sid Amos that began with the breakdown at the end of the summer with Campus Fellowship? We argue that this experience was the beginning of a transition from Stage 3 to Stage 4. The argument rests upon five points as we apply the analysis from the faith development model to Sid's religious case history. The five points are: (1) The shape of conformity of his adolescent religious style was Synthetic-Conventional faith; (2) The breakdown was the beginning of the transition struggle; (3) A major aspect of the struggle was a shift in the locus of authority; (4) Changes of churches was an expression of changed group boundaries; (5) Rethinking of theology was reconceptualizing of symbols which became, for Sid, an expression of reflective faith.

Synthetic Conventional Faith

At the age of thirteen the frequency of religious participation is a very good indicator of the type of religious background in the family. At that age we find Sid Amos deepling involved in the life of First Church of the Alpha denomination.[1] He went whenever the doors were open,[2] spending six to eight hours on Sundays,[3] and two to three hours on each Wednesday.[4] This was, in part, because he lived in a small town and there was little else for young folk to do.[5] It was also because it was the family tradition,[6] and one of his mother's most

important values. The participation pattern continued into his high
school years.[7] Sid was conforming to what was expected of him as all
good Christian young people were expected to do. Conformity to the
family expectation and the form of the religious tradition of one's back-
ground is a major characteristic of the Synthetic-Conventioal Stage 3 of
faith development.

The content of faith for adolescent Sid was synthetic, that is,
it was the traditional interpretatin of the Alpha Church. He had been
baptized by immersion as was expected of him,[8] in the style of the
Alpha Church. He interpreted it later as conforming to the group expec-
tation.[10] It was to his mother's faith style that he conformed, in
contrast with his father's prodigal behavior and return to the Beta style
church.[11] He said of himself, "I began as a rigid closed-minded funda-
mentalist." He held on to these doctrinal assertions which were taught
to him through adolescence and half his college years.[26]

Holding sharp in-group/out-group boundary lines and distrust of
outsiders who are not in personal relationship is another characteristic
of Stage 3 faith style. Sid reported that he was suspicious of other
denominations than his own Alpha Church.[12] He was afraid that they
might pollute his thinking. Had his Alpha Church leaders not taught him
that?[13] In this echo of distrust of others we can hear the authoritar-
ian claim that the Alpha Church has the sole truth, and leaders of other
churches are in error. Even when he went away from home to the Univer-
sity, Sid continued to keep his association with the Alpha group.[14]
Fowler has commented in his description of this transition to Stage 4
that the identification with a group in the away from home situation

makes a great deal of difference. Sid was keeping the relationship with the group like back home. Even the Campus Fellowship was a perpetuation of the authority, tradition, and style of the Synthetic Faith he had known back in First Church.[15]

Transition Struggle

The transition from Synthetic-Conventional Faith to Individuative Reflective Faith involves personal struggle of two kinds. It requires a break with the people who have been the support system, the parents, folk back in the hometown, and previous authority persons like ministers. This change may involve a person in considerable personal difficulty. The second kind of personal struggle is the process of rethinking the forms of faith and of questioning one's childhood belief system. This demands considerable mental activity and investment of time. Fowler suggests that many people do not make this transition, perhaps because it involves such struggle. It is not surprising to find that Sid had a difficult time breaking out of the Synthetic-Conventional style. Leaving home is one external circumstance which contributes to the transition. Sid made the geographical shift when he went to the State University.[14] The emotional leaving of home came through the process of the breakdown and depression, which he described as "internal conflict, fatigue, exhaustion, and clinical depression."[16]-[17] He did not turn back to his parents for help because he felt they would not understand.[17] Nor did he turn to the Alpha campus director to be his advisor when he had a falling out with the Campus Fellowship.[18] The form of his personal struggle was shaped by his personality, for he too

was "reticent," like father,[19] so he struggled to work it out by himself.[20] His girl friend, Bell, supplied the listening ear and sympathy.[21] In his response of "doing this by myself," Sid was asserting his "executive ego" and he refused to turn back to the previous authority persons and dependencies. This is essential to the faith development transition from Stage 3 to Stage 4. We interpret the breakdown as the beginning of Sid's transition, and note from his reports that it took several years to work through to a Stage 4 outlook.

Sid's transition involved a breaking of relationships with the traditional forms of his childhood faith. He left the Campus Fellowship and the campus expressions of the Alpha Church. He gave up his office,[22] and quit going to church, and turned to work on the young adult tasks of finishing school and establishing himself in the adult working world.[23] By the end of his senior year he had rejected the Synthetic-Conventional style of his home church and was actively searching for something to take its place.[24]

The Authority Shift

One of the variables and facets in the faith development model is the Locus of Authority which changes from one stage to the next. In religion, authority is a very crucial matter and this may be the clearest indicator of a faith stage change. We see in Sid's story a shift of location of authority from his mother, the hometown preacher, director from the Alpha Church, and leaders of Campus Fellowship, who constituted the Synthetic-Conventional locus. There was an earlier disagreement with his parents that pointed toward an authority shift. It had to do with

his choice of schools. He had been in the church choir all the way
through youth and was quite attached to music. By the end of his Junior
year in High School he decided that he wanted to be a music major in col-
lege, and that he wanted to go to State University. His parents were
trying to talk him into going to the Junior College for a couple of
years, but he wanted to get away from home. He won, and went to State
and enrolled in music. In the summer camp of Campus Fellowship, it was
the issue of authority that made him begin to look at everything with a
jaundiced eye. The authoritarianism of the Campus Fellowship manual just
turned him off.[15] Sid was beginning to reject "the tyranny of they"
and was questioning the values and meanings that he had not previously
questioned. He tested the traditional faith ways and found them wanting
for they did not help him with his problem.[24] As he began to think and
search things out for himself, he was engaging his Executive Ego.[25]
The process of shifting the sense of authority from the traditional other
persons to himself continued in the questioning process with the doctor
in Third Church.[26] This thinking process was encouraged by the pastor
of Fifth Church.[30] We note that later when he went east, and when he
expressed his Credo, his locus of authority was clearly in his own abil-
ity to think it out for himself, a characteristic of Individuative-
Reflective faith.[37]

Changed Group Boundaries

Stage 3 faith style depends on conforming to conventional ways
and groups, so the moving to Stage 4 often requires changing churches,
either in the local community, or in denomination. Sid questioned the

traditions of Alpha Churches,[25] and felt that they were inadequate.[27] He and Bell seemed to be slow and reluctant to do this as they kept trying other Alpha Churches, but finally turned to another denomination and a local Gamma Church.[28] This is a very clear change from the defensive group definition of his high school years when he would not trust a Gamma for fear of losing his faith. This was a clear shift from the exclusiveness and group conformity of the Campus Fellowship and its witnessing.[29] The Gamma Church was more open in its acceptance of persons, because it would even take persons who doubted and questioned.[32] For Sid and Bell the more open boundaries of group life were desirable as they joined Tenth Church and they commented that the toleration of individualism was a determining factor.[31] Stage 4 defines group life with more openness than Stage 3.

Reflective Faith

The description of Stage 4 faith calls for the individual use of the mind in a reflective process of evaluating the faith traditions and values of one's personal background. Sid was questioning and searching by the end of his senior year.[25] But he was so busy in his tasks of young adulthood to give much more time to thinking about religious traditions until he reached the more encouraging environment of Fifth Church.[30] In the move to the east, the choice of group identification in a Gamma Church was indicative of the new identity that Sid was forming.[33] The process of demythologizing the traditional Alpha thinking took Sid several years. Symbols of religion were not rejected by him, they were reworked.

This process of separating meaning from symbol is reflected by the reading Sid was doing. Harry Emerson Fosdick was the champion of "liberal" interpretations of the faith and was the enemy of the "fundamentalists."[34] Reading Fosdick's books involved Sid in a process which was keeping the symbols of the Christian faith by giving them new meanings. Reading of the Interpreter's Bible was shifting to a viewpoint on interpretation of Scripture acceptable in the Gamma Church, but not approved by authority persons of his former background in Alpha and Beta Churches.[35] The viewpoint expressed in The Christian Agnostic by Weatherhead is a summary of reinterpretation from the perspective of a Reflective faith style.[36] Sid became bold and confident in his individualism so that be began to read secular writers. When he states his Credo he indicates his individualism which depends on his own ability and authority, as he says: "I think that my Credo is or has to be a very independent or individual thing now, and that I have a perfect right to disbelieve any part of the traditional creeds of the church that I choose."[37] Perhaps the clearest indication of a reworked symbol for Sid was the symbol of baptism. The Amoses were willing to accept the method of sprinkling and the baptism of a child. They had separated the meaning of the symbol of baptism from the form identification of the Alpha Church which had insisted on a believer's baptism by immersion.[38] Separating the meaning from the symbol is a characteristic of Stage 4 faith.

We summarize the case of Sid Amos. He came from a religious background which emphasized conformity to the authority, doctrine, and

tradition of the Church, a Synthetic-Conventional faith style. He went through a transition which began with an emotional breakdown, and included a long struggle to change. He moved from accepting the religious authority of the tradition and leaders of the Alpha type church to confidence in his own views and interpretations. He changed from a group with strict boundaries to one which was more open and accepting of persons. He worked through a thinking process about beliefs which took him from unthinking acceptance to a reflective and individuative faith. The case of Sid Amos is a case of transition from Stage 3 to Stage 4 of the Faith Development model.

The reader may wonder about Sid's wife, Bell. She also came from the background of the Alpha denomination. She went through a similar transition to a Stage 4 way of faith. Sid describes her as always being more independent thinking than he was. For her the transition was not as traumatic.

<center>RELUCTANCE IN THE CASE OF SID</center>

What would have happened if Sid Amos at Stage 4 had been on our Church Council faced with a decision about participation in a program of "Evangelism?" How would Sid respond to a proposal that the congregation join in a door to door distribution of literature with other churches? How would he respond to the proposal of the ecumenical city group to bring a well known evangelist to the community? Sid would have a negative response to all of these. The Interview Report shows that Sid has the reluctance factor. It is found in the statement: "But we do not like a church that we feel tries to force us into a particular mold."[38]

Sid also shows a negative attitude toward traditional beliefs: "I have a perfect right to disbelieve any part of the traditional creeds that I choose."[39] Sid would be reluctant to get involved in a program which resembles the faith style he has left behind.

The root of Sid's reluctance lies in his refusal to go back to the faith style of his earlier years. He now feels free from the forms of theology[39] and ceremony of his childhood church background. He still finds himself arguing against the beliefs he left behind.[40] Our first conclusion from the case of Sid Amos is that the reluctance factor is rooted in a personal rejection of a former faith style.

Our interpretation of Sid's story claims that his experience was a transition from Stage 3 Synthetic-Conventional faith style to Stage 4 Individuative-Reflective faith style. Those making this transition have changed their way of thinking regarding logic, perspective taking, moral reasoning, social awareness, authority, form of world coherence, and symbols. The language, theology, and approach of a Stage 3 program of evangelism would shut off a positive response from a person who is at Stage 4 of faith development. Our second conclusion is that the reluctance factor found among the main line church members may be due to the presence in those churches of a number of persons who have a Stage 4 faith style. Sid Amos was not on the Church Council during his stay in Tenth Church. He did not have to make the decisions about programs of evangelism, literature distribution, or bringing in evangelists. But others on the Church Council with faith stories similar to Sid's did make decisions against such evangelistic programs. They, too, had the reluctance factor.

There is evidence in the interview that Sid and Bell were happy in the life of Tenth Church.[37]-[38] They found it to be a church that encouraged their Stage 4 style of faith. The <u>third conclusion</u> from the case of Sid Amos is that churches which wish to recruit persons like Sid and Bell into their membership would do well to avoid the language, theology, and methods which are used by churches with a Stage 3 style of faith. They would need to make sure that their communications in worship, preaching, publications, and methodology reflect a style which represents a Stage 4 understanding of faith. This topic will be pursued further in Chapter VI.

In the case of Sid Amos we find someone who has had a conversion experience. The conversion experience has loomed large in the history of Protestant Churches, and it receives much emphasis these days in various churches under the label of being "born again." Sid's story illustrates what can happen when the call for this experience becomes institutionalized in a local church as a requirement for adult membership. His conversion occurred when he was six or seven and he recalls it as an emotional event.[8] It came because it was expected; for he felt he would be left out of the group if he did not follow this pattern.[10] Faith development reminds us that this occurred at a time in Sid's life when a major motivation is the pressure to conform to the expectation of elders. Sid's unhappiness with this experience and his later satisfaction after the stage transition leads us to explore the matter further in Chapter V. It will be discussed in the context of a review of the experience of the Apostle Paul, since the Damascus Road event is used as a major part of the rationale for the recurring emphasis on conversion.

Chapter V

BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES ON FAITH TRANSITIONS

"He who once persecuted us is now preaching the
faith he once tried to destroy."
Galatians 1:23

INTRODUCTION

Exploration of the reluctance of people in many churches to
become involved in evangelism led us to seek an explanation in the theory
of faith development. The case of Sid Amos illustrated the reluctance
of a person who had made the transition from Synthetic-Conventional faith
to Individuative-Reflective faith. This case raised questions about the
emphasis on conversion commonly used by evangelists. One major source of
the conversion message is the Biblical account and viewpoint of the
apostle Paul. The purpose of this chapter is to examine this relation-
ship between conversion and the religious experience of Paul to see if
faith development can be used as a framework of interpretation.

Biblical interpretation in its final stage involves translating
ancient personal records into a framework of modern thought. We will
first review some basic assumptions about human nature and biblical
interpretation. Several houses of interpretation have been built from
materials quarried from Pauline records and scholars do not agree about
them. There has been a historical argument between those who use a con-
version theory and those who claim that Paul's experience was a voca-
tional call. Since Reformation days it has been common to stress

conversion. In modern times scholars such as Bultmann have taken a different view and interpreted Paul from an existentialist perspective. Betz and Stendahl have recently built the theory of vocational calling. The review of these matters and a critique of these views will be from the perspective of faith development.

The Chapter will test the perspective of faith development as a possible framework by which to interpret the records of Paul's religious experience. The thesis proposed here is that Paul exhibited the characteristics of Synthetic-Conventional faith as a rabbinical student, and moved through a transition to an Individuative-Reflective faith style as he became an apostle for Jesus Christ. The book of Galatians will be examined for evidence because it has autobiographical material. Clues to Paul's Conventional stage are found in his former life in Judaism, his zeal for tradition, and his attitude toward the law. Evidence of Paul's faith transition is found in both the conversion and the calling experiences, and also the time spent in Arabia. The evidence of his Individuative-Reflective faith is found in his views on authority, his dichotomizing logic, his demythologizing thinking, and new definitions of community. The conclusion made is that Paul did have a faith transition from Stage 3 to Stage 4 and it included both his conversion and his calling.

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT HUMAN NATURE

Behind the use of ancient scripture is an assumption about its relevance to modern persons and times. The assumption here is that

modern human beings have essentially the same nature as human beings of ancient times. Faithing is a common human experience, although social, political, and cultural factors may be different. It is assumed that people are essentially similar in matters of faithing. Interpreting scripture from ancient times involves bridging the social, political, and cultural differences. A major part of this has to do with language and meanings. This task of bridging language belongs to Biblical scholars. Norman Perrin describes the task as including the steps of textual, historical, and literary criticism, and then the act of interpretation. The hermeneutic task involves translating the text into a modern framework of thought in a dynamic interaction between text and interpreter.[1]

But is human nature the same as it was in the 1st century? That assumption is made here and by many others who interpret the Scriptures. Rudolph Bultmann, key 20th century scholar, makes his New Testament interpretation using a 20th century existentialist perspective. He argues that "every assertion about God is simultaneously an assertion about man and vice versa. For this reason and in this sense Paul's theology is at the same time, anthropology...."[2] Bultman in his methodology was stripping the Kerygma from its mythical framework and reconstructing the New Testament writings to fit the philosophy of the modern world. The world view which he used for his interpretation was the existentialist philosophy of Heidegger. Stendahl comments about this:

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[1]Norman Perrin, Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976) pp. 2-9.

[2]Rudolph Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951) I, 188.

"Bultmann made, candidly and openly, the statement that his existential hermeneutics rests on the presupposition that man is essentially the same through the ages, and that his continuity in the human self-consciousness is the common denominator between the New Testament and any age in human history."[3] This claim that human nature is the same now as it was in the 1st century is a standard assumption of Biblical interpretation.

A further argument about the assumptions for Biblical interpretation comes from the preacher's perspective. If humans are not essentially the same through the ages, how can a person make the reverse claim that ancient Scriptures speak to the condition of modern human beings? If modern humans are different, then ancient claims about human sinfulness, and a gospel of redeeming love have no relevance! If humans are not essentially the same as in the time when Scripture was written, then it does little good to proclaim a message of righteousness, a vision of justice, a relationship with a living God, framed in faith, hope, and love. The preacher who uses the Scriptures assumes its relevance to modern times and the essential similarity of humans then and now. Religious leaders of many traditions, who use ancient scriptures, operate on the basis of this assumption about human nature.

Can we then argue the reverse of this matter, and say that a theory of faith development, described in the 20th century, can be applied across cultural boundaries and centuries of history? Is it

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[3]Krister Stendahl, Paul Among Jews and Gentiles (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976) p. 88.

proper to use the views of faith development to interpret the records of the life and thought of Paul? The answer to this depends on whether or not faith development describes a universal pattern of human faithing. The viewpoint that we find in Fowler begins with his claim that faith, as he defines it, is a human universal. Faith is

> ...so fundamental that none of us can live well for long without it, so universal that when we move beneath the symbols, rituals and ethnic patterns that express it, faith is recognizably the same phenomenon in Christians, Marxists, Hindus and Dinka, yet it is so infinitely varied that each person's faith is unique.[4]

Fowler considers that all persons are endowed with the capacity for faith and this capacity is activated by the particular environment of the person. Faith is thus interactive with the social context and requires the nurture of community language and ritual. It is also shaped by the initiatives beyond the individual through other persons and the initiatives of spirit or grace.[5]

Fowler also implies that the stages of the faith development patterns have universal application. This is suggested by one of his earlier books called Trajectories in Faith. In the book he and his students tested the faith development model with application to biography. The cases used include the life stories of Malcolm X, Anne Hutchinson, Blaise Pascal, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. All of these persons have ample biographical materials to make a serious assessment of their personal story. They also represent a variety of religious

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[4]James W. Fowler, Stages of Faith (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981) p. xiii.

[5]Ibid.

backgrounds and cultural situations. Malcolm X was from the background
of Negro life in the United States in the 20th century, and his story
includes conversion to a Black Muslim faith, and a reorientation to
Mecca. Anne Hutchinson was a free thinking New England Congregationalist
in the colonial days of the 17th century. Blaise Pascal was a Frenchman
of the 17th century, known as a mathmetician and scientist, who turned
into a religious leader. Ludwig Wittgenstein was a 19th century Austrian
of Jewish and Roman Catholic background who became an outstanding secular
philosopher. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a Christian pastor and theologian
in the opposition movement against Hitler in the 20th century. This
selection of cases shows persons of different faith content, and differ-
ent periods of history. Fowler claims that their progress in religious
life shows similar stages. The faith development stages describe the
structure of their faith which he calls their faith knowing.[6] This bio-
graphical use demonstrates the application of faith development across
cultural boundaries and backward into the historical past.

The faith development model advanced by Fowler is based on psych-
ological research. The patterns of stages was ascertained by collecting
the faith stories of a number of persons and analyzing the similarities
and differences. This has required a method of consistent interviewing
and reporting of data. It also required a consistent rating and classi-
fication system. The validity of such psychological research can be
claimed only on the basis of an adequate testing of the model. Most of

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[6]James W. Fowler, Robin W. Lovin, et al., Trajectories in Faith
(Nashville: Abingdon, 1980).

the persons interviewed to establish the data pool for the theory were
20th century Americans. When asked about the application of faith devel-
opment to peoples of other backgrounds, Fowler responds:

> We have not yet done any serious cross-cultrual research on faith
> development. Preliminary work with Hindus, Moslims and Christians of
> India, and with Malaysian and Liberal Christians suggests that a
> stage sequence helpfully illuminates differences in the ways persons
> make meaning in those different traditions and contexts.[7]

At least one such study has been done since Fowler wrote this.[8] In the

meantime, faith development theory and stages remain a hypothetical, but

a usable theory.

THE HOUSES OF INTERPRETATION

Scholar A. T. Hanson speaks of the Old Testament as the quarry

from which essential materials of the New Testament were taken. Unlike a

stream or river, which suggests a single source, "a quarry is a place

from which various builders can draw their materials in order to build,

perhaps, a great variety of houses."[9] The quarry image is most fitting

as a metaphor for describing New Testament interpretation also, since

many workmen have engaged in building a great variety of houses of scrip-

tural interpretation. Since Reformation times Paul's religious

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[7]Fowler, Stages, p. 279.

[8]Other persons are currently doing cross cultural studies with
the application of Fowler's methods of research. For example, Randall
Furushima. Faith Development Theory, and a Cross Cultural Research
Project in Hawaii. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Columbia Univer-
sity, 1983.

[9]Anthony T. Hanson, Studies in Paul's Technique and Theology
(London: SPCK, 1974) p. 272.

experience has been built into the interpretive house labeled Conversion. Bultmann, in modern times, built a house of interpretation with the modern philosophy of Existentialism. In more recent years, Betz and Stendahl have attempted to tear these down and build a new model house entitled Vocational Calling. These interpreters do not seem to agree, yet they quarry the same material. They may have valuable pieces of building material for yet another house of interpretation using faith development.

The Conversion Model

It has been common for many years to call the experience described in Galatians 1 an account of the conversion of Saul the Jew into Paul the Christian. From the days of Martin Luther this conversion model has been interpreted in terms of the theology of the Reformer which focuses on Galatians 3:11, "Now it is evident that no man is justified before God by the Law; for 'He who through faith is righteous shall live.'" The root of this is the conflict between two styles of faith – "works righteousness" and "justification by faith." In his Commentary on Galatians Luther uses this passage 3:11 to explicitly describe his own religious struggle.

> In like manner say I of myself, that before I was lightened with the knowledge of the gospel, I was as zealous for the papistical laws and traditions of the fathers...most earnestly maintaining them as holy and necessary for salvation. I endeavored to observe and keep them myself...punishing my poor body with fasting, watching, praying, and other exercises....[10]

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[10]Martin Luther, Commentary of Galatians (Philadelphia: Quaker City, 1972) p. 187.

This interpretation by Luther has become the standard model of explaining the religious experience of Paul. Luther speaks of it as a conversion.[11]

The main stream of interpretation since Luther has followed this conversion viewpoint. We will illustrate this with several references. Edgar J. Goodspeed, a translator of the New Testament, put together "a biography" from the evidences of the apostle's writing, under the title Paul. He depicts the Pharisaism of the day as legalistic and "warring in the troubled heart of Saul" who was in a "desperate effort to carry out its tenents to their fullest expression."[12] A bystander at the stoning of Stephen, he set out to Damascas "breathing threats against the disciples." Goodspeed pictured him as an exceedingly troubled young man questioning what was the will of God and who was this Jesus? At midday "His figure rose before the mind of Saul...who saw him in a new light... as a master and leader who could deliver him from all his confusion and pain...burst upon him with all the suddenness of a revelation."[13] Goodspeed concludes that Paul's conversion remains the most conspicuous example of a complete and instantaneous about-face in religion."[14]

The extent to which the conversion model has become a standard viewpoint can be seen in its use in The Interpreter's Bible. This reference work is generally considered to represent a middle of the road or liberal theological viewpoint. Raymond T. Stamm, in the Exegesis of

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[11]Ibid.

[12]Edgar J. Goodspeed, Paul (Nashville: Abingdon, 1947) p. 4.

[13]Ibid., p. 6. [14]Ibid., p. 7.

Galatians 1:12 speaks of Paul as "twice-born man who regards his vision at Damascas as a sudden miraculous change in his relationship to God."[15] Again he speaks of this conversion viewpoint when he adds that Paul "never did stop to analyze this catastrophic redirection of his life; it was revelation, and that was all he needed to say."[16] That was also all that the commentator felt he needed to say, except to direct the reader to the acount of the incident in the book of Acts. Oscar Blackwelder in the Exposition of the same passage depicts the inner turmoil of the apostle and the heavy conflict of the experience. He gives the standard post-Luther interpretation: "Paul moved over and up from abstract obedience into a personal life of companionship and living union with God, moved from a book of rules to personal attachment."[17] The change in Paul was attributed to a change in his idea of God, from a "task-master" with a law book, to the grace concept of God. "Whatever happened in this conversion had to be transcendent enough to account for the complete reversal of Paul's life."[18] These interpretations form the source of biblical instruction of the main-line churches continuing with the standard model of interpretation as conversion.

A conservative theological view is presented in a commentary on Galatians by William Hendriksen, dated 1968. His comments on 1:14 refer

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[15]Raymond T. Stamm, "Epistle to the Galatians: Introduction and Exegesis," in Interpreters Bible (New York: Abingdon, 1953) X, 455.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Oscar F. Backwelder, "Epistle to the Galatians: Exposition," in Interpreters Bible (New York: Abingdon, 1953) X, 455.

[18]Ibid.

to the persecution and its motivation: "This incentive was supplied by the progress which he had made in Pharasaic Judaism, a religion of works and bondage"[19] [emphasis is his]. The description continues with a very harsh picture of the irreconcilable clash between Christianity and Judaism with Paul "chopping ahead in the Jewish religion as a pioneer who is cutting his way through a forest, destroying every obstacle in order to advance."[20] [The emphasis is his.] Hendriksen describes no lukewarmness in the unconverted Paul, and this harsh picture is placed in sharp contrast to the glowing terms describing Paul after the conversion. A flood of light on Paul had "changed vehement denial into rapturous conviction" as he now saw "Christ as Victor, full of mercy and grace," embracing "both Jew and Gentile and all who would place their God-given trust in him."[21]

In summary, since Luther, the standard interpreation of Paul's religious experience has been the conversion model. All theological viewpoints seem to follow it. The meaning of this conversion was taken from Luther's own religious experience and struggle. Luther saw this as a conversion from a righteousness achieved by works of the law to a justification before God through grace. Grace was a gift and it was perceived by faith. This interpretation has become the standard model for Protestant theology ever since. One consequence is the frequent call for the conversion experience in the Protestant church tradition.

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[19]William Hendriksen, Commentary on Galatians (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1968) p. 14.

[20]Ibid., p. 16.   [21]Ibid., p. 19.

The Existential Model

In the 20th century some Bible scholars have departed from the standard Reformation interpretation of the experience of Paul. Among these is Rudolph Bultmann whose "demythologizing" of the Scripture has made a great impact on scholarship. Bultmann refers to the experience as conversion, but instead of using Luther's experience to frame the interpretation he uses existentialist philosophy. He describes Paul's experience as an existential experience. "In it he surrendered his previous identity of himself...what had been the norm and meaning of his life, he sacrificed what had been his pride and joy."[22] This conversion was not the result of inner moral collapse..."not rescue from the despair into which the cleavage between willing and doing had allegedly driven him."[23] Bultmann suggests that it was not a conversion of repentence, nor one of emancipating enlightenment. "Rather it was obedient submission to the judgment of God, made known in the cross of Christ, upon all human accomplishment and boasting."[24] This is an existentialist perspective using a theological focus on the Kerygma of the church. This message asserted that the crucified Jesus of Nazareth, risen from the dead, was the Messiah. The message called into question Paul's understanding of himself as a Jew. It proclaimed God's judgment on "his Jewish striving after righteousness by fulfilling the works of the law."[25] Thus Bultmann in his interpretation keeps the use of the word conversion, and

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[22]Bultmann, _Theology_, I, 188.   [23]Ibid.   [24]Ibid.   [25]Ibid.

he retains the conflict over works-righteousness. Bultmann's philosophical perspective is rooted in the philosophy of Heidegger.

Vocational Calling Model

Two contemporary scholars of the work of Paul reject the conversion model and its Reformation pattern. One of these is Hans D. Betz, scholar and author of a new commentary on the book of Galatians. He claims that, strictly speaking, we cannot call this a conversion.

> Paul was called to be a missionary to the Gentiles and he changed parties within Judaism from Pharisaism to Jewish Christianity. Jewish Christianity was still a movement within Judaism, so that one should not call it 'conversion' from Judaism to Christianity.[26]

Betz suggests that Paul was not only a Jew, but he was faithful and a zealous observer of the Jewish religion, with unblemished standing. He had no reason to leave Judaism, for he had "made progres in its practice and thought among his people and surpassed others his own age."[27]

Why then should such a good Jew join in persecution of the followers of the Way of Jesus? Betz argues that the excessive nature of his persecution just demonstrates the high degree of zeal. "Such conduct was not extremist or a form of murderous fanaticism, but was in conformity with the contemporary expectations of what a faithful Jew ought to have been."[28] This implies that a zealous Jew was expected to join in throwing stones at a blasphemer, or encourage the punishment of opponents of the faith by witnessing against such error before the Council. The

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[26]Hans D. Betz, Galatians (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979) p. 64.

[27]Ibid.   [28]Ibid., p. 67.

arrest of dissidents, even in another territory, was considered moral
zealous behavior.

Krister Stendahl also argues that the conversion view is an
error. Searching the history of religions, he suggests that Paul was
used and quoted for several centuries on the relations of Jews and
Gentiles without any reference to conversion. St. Augustine was the per-
son who turned the interpretation of Paul inward according to Stendahl.
The views of the Bishop of Hippo persisted in Western Christianity which
used this introspective emphasis until an Augustinian monk named Luther
picked up Paul, "and found in him God's answer to his problem, the
problem of the West, and the problem of the late medieval piety of the
West."[29] Stendahl suggests that the reformer worked on the themes of
faith and works, Law and Gospel, Jews and Gentiles, and saw the apostle's
arguments about the Torah as the general principle of legalism in
religion.

Stendahl argues that Paul's experience was not "an inner experi-
ence of conversion."[30] He claims that Paul was instead a very happy and
successful Jew who could say "as to righteousnes under the law (I was)
blameless."[31] "Nowhere in Paul's writing is there any indication that he
had any difficulty fulfilling what he as a Jew understood to be the
requirements of the Law."[32] There is no indication psychologically that
Paul had problems of conscience with which he had had, or was to have any
major difficulties."[33] There was no remorse, nor doubt, nor

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[29]Stendahl, p. 17.   [30]Ibid., p. 12.   [31]Phil. 3:6.

[32]Stendahl, p. 13.   [33]Ibid.

self-incrimination, according to Stendahl. He says that the experience should be interpreted as a call to mission.

Summary

In summary, we note that the scholars disagree about the meaning of the apostle's experience. One school of thought from Reformation times has built and lived in the house of Conversion. A second school of thought has designed and built a house of Kerygma with an existentialist plan. The third school has moved from those houses to build one called Vocational Calling. All these dwellings are quarried from the same material. Each has fit the testimony of the Apostle into the framework of their own thought. These viewpoints are theological and philosophical perspectives. Others not mentioned have also departed from traditional interpretations. Many of the liberation theologians are using a socio-cultural framework for interpreting scripture. Since our age uses psychology as a basic framework for many interpretations of human experience, let us turn to a model which is grounded in psychological research. How does the evidence of the Apostle's testimony fit into the framework of faith development theory?

PAUL AND CONVENTIONAL TRADITION

The thesis presented here is that Paul exhibited the characteristics of a Synthetic-Conventional faith as a rabbinical student, and that he moved through a transition to an Individuative-Reflective faith style as he became an apostle for Jesus Christ. To develop this view we first describe the Synthetic Conventional faith style and test it against

Paul's comments about his former life in Judaism, his zeal for tradition, and attitude toward legalism.

Faith development theory assumes that every person follows a similar pattern in their younger years and goes through an Intuitive-Projective Stage I and a Mythic-Literal Stage 2. These have been described in Chapter III but we will summarize some of the characteristics here. A person at Stage II is described as making literal interpretation of statements and as having a bookkeeper attitude toward accumulating data. Symbols are directly associated with the power derived from symbols. As Stage II persons take to themselves the faith style, beliefs, rituals, and observances of their family's home religious life and their institutional involvement. Social boundaries are limited to their own family group and its racial or ethnic grouping. The incumbents of authority positions are accepted as the authorities and are symbols of power.

Former Life in Judaism

Paul writes: "You have heard of my former life in Judaism...."[34] Whatever else that phrase may mean, it certainly identifies Paul's background and upbringing as Jewish. We assume then that he went through the Stage 1 and Stage 2 expressions of faith within the traditions, customs, rituals, and observances of the Hellenistic Jews of his home town of Tarsus. He learned the Ten Comandments and the other rules of right and wrong behavior as defined by his home in the pattern of Pharasaic

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[34]Gal. 1:3.

Judaism.[35] The guide for his childhood morality was the teaching of the Jewish Biblical tradition. His beliefs during his pre-adolescent years would have been held literally. Narrative traditions of the people would have filled his mind with stories of Biblical heroes. Certainly one of these was his namesake, Saul, although he makes no later reference to the early Jewish King.

All of this is an assumption that Paul had a normal Stage 2 Mythic-Literal faith. After describing this style Fowler comments: "We see why the schoolboy or girl (or older person described as Stage 2) remains heavily dependent upon a specific set of rules, guidelines, or directives for shaping moral behavior more generally."[36] Faith development teaches us that it is natural for a Stage 2 person to think in terms of rules, and obedience to authority.

It is asumed that Paul also had characteristics of Stage 3 faith. These were also described in Chapter III, but we will review the characteristics here. A Stage 3 person would look at the whole tradition as part of the individual's identity and the source of identification. Belonging to the group is very important. Stage 3 persons are conformists, either to parents to peers, or both. They often hunger for religious experience at this age and seek to find a guarantor for the myths of the tradition. The authority still resides in those persons who have a reputation for authority and the positions of authority. Social boundaries are larger than the limited family and ethnic identity, and may even include individuals from outside these by personal acquaintance.

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[35]Phil. 3:5.   [36]Fowler, Stages, p. 66.

Prejudice toward those on the outside is still common. The values and beliefs of a person in Stage 3 are unexamined and the faith style takes a shape of duty and obedience and conformity.

Do we find these characteristics in the autobiograhical comments in Galatians? Paul speaks of being "zealous for the tradition of my fathers."[37] These traditions involved the strict practice of the rite of circumcision, the keeping of food laws, and the faithful observance of festivals. These matters later became an issue with Paul. The authority for the faith rested in the Torah, interpreted by the Rabbis. Any conflicts of viewpoint would be resolved in the rabbinical school by quotations from respected authorities as the students moved beyond literalism. Legalism defined as faithfulness to the tradition would be threatened by the rise of a sect group with alternative emphasis.

In faithfulness to this tradition of his ancestors Paul "advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age."[38] He was obedient to elders and anxious to please them, and this reference suggests that he was more faithful in prayers and ritual than his fellow students. It also suggests that he had a competitive spirit, working hard for honors, and striving to outdo others in recitation of lessons. In Stage 3 there is little questioning of the faith. We assume that his zeal in study was what enabled him to advance to the place of attending the prestigeous school of the Rabbi Gamaliel in Jerusalem, religious capital of the faithful. We find evidence that this rabbinical student was Synthetic-Conventional in his faith style.

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[37]Gal. 1:14. [38]Gal. 1:14.

Further evidence of Paul's Stage 2 and 3 legalism is found in Galatians 3 in the middle of a theological argument. In discussing the place of the Law, as the symbol for the entire tradition, he argues: "The Law was our custodian until Christ came...."[39] The word used in the RSV as "custodian" has been translated in various ways. Betz comments that the Greek work has been translated as "teacher," "Pedigogue," "schoolmaster," and "guardian," associated with the teaching profession. He claims that in antiquity the pedigogue was a slave who actually accompanied the child to school, carried his books, etc. The task of the slave was to protect the child, teaching good manners, and the schoolboy remained under this supervision until the time of puberty.[40] Stendahl followed this line of reasoning and suggests that the RSV's "custodian" is the best translation.[41] He says, "The Law came according to Paul, as a harsh baby sitter, to see that the children of Israel did not raid the refrigerator before the great party at which the Gentiles should also be present."[42]

If Paul is saying, "the Law was our custodian," does he not imply that the law was "my" custodian. If we interpret this passage in a developmental framework we recognise that legalism and being under the

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[39]Gal. 3:24.

[40]This phrase which describes the custodial function of the law has special significance to this writer. The discovery of the function of the custodian or tutor as a universal experience of children became a key clue to a useful interpretation of Galatians. This insight helped me to make use of this letter even before faith development theory came along.

[41]Stendahl, pp. 120-121.   [42]Ibid., p. 121.

care of a tutor or custodian are necessary stages of personal develop-
ment. These are part of the Mythic-Literal Stage 2. The function of all
the rules and commandments is to train children and to teach them the
basic values of justice, respect for others, and recognition of author-
ity. In order to become a responsible adult a minor must be taught
standards of right and wrong, rules of etiquette, the Ten Commandments,
ritual behaviors, etc. Although Paul does not think in terms that are
from psychology he is making an argument that sounds like modern develop-
mental thinking. "The law was our custodian until Christ came that we may
be justified by faith. But now that faith has come we are no longer
under the custodian."[43] This statement is commonly interpreted with
theological-historical meaning, but it also has psychological-
biographical meaning. It can be interpreted as a statement of Paul's
testimony to his own experience of law in the Mythic-Literal stage of his
own life.

In Stages of Faith James Fowler makes little reference to Paul or
his religious experience. One statement does relate to our discussion,
as follows: "It seems likely, for example, that St. Paul, can be under-
stood as being best described by Stage 4 Individuative-Reflective faith
at the time of his life-changing encounter on the Damascus Road."[44] The
paragraph continues with a discussion of the patterns of logic found in
Paul's writing. A footnote on the paragraph refers to "reflections on
St. Paul informally shared with me" by an able New Testament scholar
William Thompson, S. J.[45] No evidence is offered for the claim that the

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[43]Gal. 3:24-5. [44]Fowler, Stages, p. 298. [45]Ibid., p. 305.

apostle was expressing Stage 4 thinking at the time of the Damascus Road experience. The logic patterns found in Galatians show Stage 4 thinking, and will be discussed in a later section of this paper. But evidence in Galatians suggest that Stage 3 thinking was more likely the pattern of Paul shortly before his Damascus journey. The Galatian evidence points to expression of Synthetic-Conventional faith by the rabbinical student. He describes his former life in Judaism as being a zeal for the tradition and a strong involvement in the custodianship of the Law. We are convinced by the evidence in Galatians that he was then in Stage 3.

FAITH TRANSITIONS

Purpose

This section will review the characteristics of the Stage 3 - Stage 4 transition as described by Fowler. Examining Galatians one finds evidence of serious clash between valued authorities, the capacity for critical reflection, experiences of leaving home, and time for rethinking the meaning of faith. These all point toward Paul's transition process. Faith development thinking also sheds light on the argument between the views of conversion and vocational calling. A stage transition interpretation can include both the experience of conversion and the reshaping of Paul's vocational calling. The thesis presented is that the stage transition was the inner thought and spiritual change precipitated by the external events which included the stoning of Stephen, the persecution of Jesus' followers, and the encouter with the Living

Christ. It continued into the time spent in Arabia which allowed Paul

opportunity to rethink his faith.

Fowler's description of matters contributing to the transition

from Stage 3 to Stage 4 includes:

> Serious <u>clashes or contradictions between valued authority sources</u>;
> marked changes, by officially sanctioned leaders, or policies or
> practices previously deemed sacred and unbreachable; the encounter
> with experiences or perspectives that <u>lead to critical reflection on
> how one's beliefs and values have formed and changed</u>, and on how
> relative they are to one's particular group or background.
> Frequently <u>the experience of "leaving home"</u> - emotionally or
> <u>physically,</u> or both - precipitates the kind of <u>examination of self</u>,
> background, and life guiding values that gives rise to stage
> transition at this point.[46]

The underlined accents on the preceding page are the items which are

pertinent to the experience of Paul, the clash of valued authorities,

critical reflection, leaving home, and examination of self.

Clashes Between Valued Authorities

Serious clashes between valued authority sources contributes to

readiness for faith stage transition. In Paul's case the valued sources

of authority were the tradition of the Law on the one hand, and the

attractiveness of the new Jesus Way on the other. The clash was

expressed in both the social conflict of the day and in the inner per-

sonal conflict of Paul's spirit. A dominant religious group was defend-

ing its ways against a new sect proclaiming a new faith way. This

corresponded with the man's inner struggle with obedience to the

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[46]Ibid., p. 173.

tradition in which he was reared and the attractiveness of a religious way of freedom from duty dominated faith.

Evidence is found in Galatians that Paul encountered major contradictions in values when he met the followers of Jesus. "I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it."[47] This action had its setting in the social conflict of 1st century Jerusalem seeking to keep purity of the faith. Paul was defending the tradition of the Law which was under attack by these Jesus people. The account in Acts 7 of the stoning of Stephen describes a crowd response, not an individual premeditated murder. Stephen had been making a verbal attack on the tradition. The first response of rabbinical student Paul was to become involved in the defense by guarding the coats of those who attacked Stephen.[48] Luke suggests that Paul not only joined the movement to defend the faith but took considerable personal initiative. "Saul laid waste the church, entering house after house, he dragged off men and women committing them to prison."[49] Defending the faith put Paul in frequent contact with the mystery of a new faith authority.

In the history of interpretation of Paul's action this behavior is described as being personal motivation on Paul's part. The tradition which has come from Luther argues that it was an inner conflict which motivated him to persecution. Backwelder describes Paul as being at war with his conscience, "his mind torn at the seams,...revolting against the religion of rules.[50] He claims that the religion of rules always

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[47]Gal. 1:13.   [48]Acts 7:48, 8:1.   [49]Acts 8:3.

[50]Backwelder, p. 455.

functions this way, so Paul's "furious hostility to the followers of Christ made it look as if in excessive cruelty he were seeking release to his problem."[51] Goodspeed also sees the persecution as an expression of conflict involving following the Law of Moses, defending his faith, and seeking the recognition of the High Priest. This interpreter uses the inner turmoil and the struggle with sin and law as described in Romans 6 and 7. "As if seeking relief in action from his bewildering moral problems, Saul the eager young Pharisee stormed on...they must be exterminated."[52]

A different direction is taken by Betz who argues that the persecution was due to Paul's zeal.

> The excessive nature of his persecution of Christianity demonstrates a high degree of zeal for the tradition of his fathers. Such conduct was not extremist or a form of mindless fanaticism, but was in conformity with the contemporary expectation of what a faithful Jew ought to have been.[53]

The expectation of what the faithful Jew ought to be, set forth in the Torah, gave instructions to stone those guilty of blasphemy. "He who blasphemes the name of the Lord shall be put to death, all the congregation shall stone him."[54] We do not know how often this instruction was put into practice, but the Old Testament does describe such deaths by stoning.[55] This threat and punishment could be applied to those practicing as mediums, those sacrificing children, those enticing others to disloyalty to God, those serving other gods, rebellious sons, and those

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[51]Ibid.   [52]Goodspeed, pp. 15-16.   [53]Betz, p. 67.   [54]Lev. 24:16.

[55]Deaths by stoning are recorded in Lev. 24:23; Nu. 15:36; Josh. 7:25; I Kings 12:18, 21:13; 2 Chron. 10:18, 24:21; etc.

taken in adultery.[56] The threat of stoning was used as a method to enforce conformity as reported in the Gospels in the case of the woman who was taken before Jesus and accused of adultery.[57] Such behavior was not riotous crowd behavior, but the intentional discipline of those who deviated from activities which had been determined to be acceptable by the group. Such action was conformity pressure to keep the tradition secure against opponents and detractors. This is what Betz means by the "expectations of a faithful Jew," and Paul was such a Jew, "so extremely zealous...for the tradition of the fathers."[58]

The writings about faith development provide some valuable commentary on this traditional approach to interpretation as Mary Wilcox comments on moral development and social perspective. She reports that it is common for persons with Stage 3 thinking to stereotype those outside their own personal group. "The structure of stereotyping is the keyhole that shapes the Stage 3 concept of persons; the content of the stereotype varies according to the culture, subculture and significant group."[59] Stage 3 thinking persons are also still under the authority of others and their values are determined by others.

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[56]Punishment by stoning is for mediums, Lev. 20:2; for those sacrificing children, Lev. 20:2; for those enticing disloyalty to God, Deut. 13:10, 17:05; for those serving other gods, Deut. 17:05; for rebellious sons, Deut. 21:21; and for those committing adultery, Deut. 22:24, 22:21.

[57]Threats of stoning are recorded in Mt. 21:35, 23:37; Lk. 13:34, 20:06; John 8:59, 10:31-33, 11:08.

[58]Gal. 1:14.

[59]Mary M. Wilcox, Developmental Journey (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979) p. 109.

Paul's structure of stereotyping would have been drawn from his Jewish tradition. With Stage 3 thinking he would have followed the expectations of the Jewish leadership toward the followers of Jesus. In participation in violence against a group that was threatening his own group, Paul had much in common with his fellow humans. The record of segregation, the treatment of heretics, the seeking of revenge, the expulsion of dissidents, the beating of non-conformists, shows behaviors all too common among humankind. The Jesus people were outsiders to Paul's circle of personal acquaintance. They were the objects of prejudice to the defenders of the faith tradition. Paul's action in persecution was evidence that he was at that time still in Stage 3 pattern of thinking.

The Jesus followers and their leader must have also attracted Paul although there is no record of this except his post-conversion enthusiasm for Christ. "For I through the law died to the law, that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the Son of God...."[60] This experience came as a "revelation of Jesus Christ,"[61] and became a new authority for his faith.

On Leaving Home

A second indicator of the faith stage transition will be discussed under the heading of leaving home. Fowler comments:

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[60]Gal. 2:19-20a.　[61]Gal. 1:12.

> Frequently the experience of leaving home emotionally or physically
> or both, precipitates the kind of examination of self, background,
> and life guiding values that give rise to stage transition at this
> point.[62]

Fowler also suggests that whether a person really makes a move in stages

depends on the character of the groups they join after a move, and some

religious groups reinforce conventional faith systems. Paul had left his

home town of Tarsus and a tent-making apprenticeship for Gamaliel's

school in Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the city where the tradition would be

more explicit, teaching more disciplined, celebrations more exciting, and

the pressure to conform stronger. The young man from Tarsus describes

himself as "extremely zealous...for the tradition of my fathers."[63] In

school he was now competing against the sons of the scholars of the Holy

City. Yet he "advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my

people."[64] This school experience did not bring Paul to any critical

self-evaluation. Gamaliel's school reinforced Paul's conventional faith

system. It was probably like the experience of a small town student of

these days going from a conservative town and church to Wheaton College

or Bob Jones University. The campus world would be more religious than

the home town, and the pressure to conform and defend the tradition would

be greater.

On the journey to Damascus Paul was leaving the conformity pres-

sure of Jerusalem and going back into the Gentile world. The journey was

intended as a temporary one on a mission of arrest.[65] But Paul stayed

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[62]Fowler, _Stages_, p. 82. [63]Gal. 1:14. [64]Gal. 1:14.

[65]Acts 9:2.

after his conversion, and joined another group whose character was quite different from Jerusalem's conformity.[66] Experience with the Damascus Jesus group confronted Paul with a different value perspective. The acceptance by Ananias was an eye opening experience representing a very different set of values.[67] These comments do not diminish the impact on Paul of the encounter with the Living Christ but suggest that the conversion was part of a larger faith stage transition. Was not this journey to Damascas the true "leaving home" experience for Paul?

Critical Reflection

The voice that confronted Paul on the Damascus Road called him to critical reflection and self-evaluation. "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"[68] Fowler suggested that the breakdown in Stage 3 thinking includes an encounter with another perspective that leads to critical reflections.[69] A person at Stage 3 has a system of meaning and value that are unexamined. He argues that such persons cannot tell how they know what they are knowing. "To live with such a tacit system of meaning and value is analogous to the situation of the fish. Supported and sustained by water, it has no means of leaping out of the aquarium so as to reflect on the tank and its content."[70] This means that their value system has not been made an object of their reflection as a system. The transition to Stage 4 involves gaining this ability to do critical reflection on the system of value of one's own background, family,

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[66]Acts 9:10-22; Gal. 1:17.   [67]Acts 9:10-19.   [68]Acts 9:4.

[69]Fowler, p. 173.   [70]Ibid., pp. 161-162.

and neighbors. This ability is dependent on the ability to do abstract thinking. The development of this critical awareness and reflection is part of the transition through which a person goes from a Synthetic-Conventional faith style to an Individuative-Reflective stance on life.[71] Fowler claims that "Stage 4's ascendent strength has to do with its capacity for critical reflection on identity (self) and outlook (ideology)."[72]

Critical reflection on his self and his ideology appears in Paul's writing in Galatians 1 as he looks back on his earlier years and comments:

> For you have heard of my former life in Judaism; how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it; and I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the tradition of my fathers....[73]

This is not just telling a narrative, it is evaluative thinking. These passages show the characteristic of a writer who is able to write about personal experience, and reflect on its meaning from the point of view of identity issues. Paul is doing the same thing in discussing his sense of vocational calling, by talking about the meaning of his birth: "He who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles...."[74] Again Paul exhibits this type of Stage 4 thought pattern at the conclusion of his narrative about the conflict

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[71]Ibid., pp. 176-177.   [72]Ibid., p. 182.   [73]Gal. 1:13-14.

[74]Gal. 1:15-16.

with Cephas and James in Chapter 2. He concludes a descriptive passage
by shifting to analytical logic:

> We ourselves, who are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners, yet who
> know that a man is not justified by works of the law but through
> faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, in
> order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the
> law....[75]

Conflict over the style of faith has been described by Paul in terms of
meanings. Thus we see in Galatians evidence that Paul was using critical
reflection which is basic Stage 4 thinking.

The Transition Time

Fowler describes a transition from Stage 3 to Stage 4 as repre-
senting an upheaval in one's life at any point of chronology. He reports
that it can be protracted for 5 to 7 years, especially if it occurs at an
older age.[76] If the experience of Paul was a transition in stages of
faith development it would be unlikely that he would immediately go out
and exercise his new calling of preaching. He would need time to reor-
ganize his thinking, and even time to change his public reputation. It
must have taken such a readjustment time to formulate a new understanding
of faith which was to become a new theology. In the case of Sid Amos it
took several years to rethink his faith. It was some time later, after
study, before he could articulate with confidence a new point of view.

Scholars present varied opinions about how long before Paul began
his new calling. Some, like Sanders, claim that he immediately began to

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[75]Gal. 2:15-16. [76]Fowler, Stages, p. 181.

preach his newfound "Gospel."[77] Paul's testimony in Galatians suggests that it took him some time to make the adjustment. He reports: "Nor did I go up to Jerusalem...but I went away into Arabia, and again I returned to Damascus."[78] Faith development thinking would interpret the trip to Arabia as a time for rethinking. The first task of his transition would be rethinking the meaning of faith and tradition. If the letter to the Galatians is evidence of this thinking Paul no longer follows tradition. This transition took time and it was three years before he was ready to meet the apostles in Jerusalem.[79] We interpret the stage transition time as beginning in Jerusalem during the persecution, continuing through the Damascus experience, the trip to Arabia, and return to Damascus.

Conversion vs. Vocational Calling

Earlier in this chapter we reviewed the historical interpretation of Paul's religious experience that labeled it as a conversion, and the contradicting point of view which claimed it was a vocational call. Faith development theory can help to resolve this argument between the followers of the Luther tradition and the new school of Betz and Stendahl. Fowler offers another interpretation of conversion, and the stage transition view gives a perspective which suggests that both

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[77]E. D. Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism (London: Student Christian Movement, 1977) p. 41. This is based on Acts 9:20 which records that Paul immediately proclaimed Jesus, saying "He is the Son of God." There is no other reference to his preaching or giving other witness.

[78]Gal. 1:17.   [79]Gal. 1:18.

conversion and a new calling were part of Paul's transition from Stage 3 to Stage 4 faith. Fowler defines conversion in this way:

> Conversion is a significant recentering of one's previous conscious or unconscious images of value and power, and the conscious adoption of a new set of master stories in the commitment to reshape one's life in a new community of interpretation and action.[80]

The letter to the Galatians shows considerable evidence of the recentering of Paul's conscious images of power and value. These images are no longer found in the traditions of the Law. The Law no longer has power for Paul, who says, "We...who know that a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ."[81] His zeal for such is now gone, and the Law comes under the criticism of his reflective thinking. "The law was our custodian until Christ came, that we might be justified by faith."[82] Images of power in his view are now centered in the loyalty to Jesus Christ. "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law...."[83] These images are all based in Paul's own religious experience, and not what he had been taught by the tradition. "God who had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me...."[84] "It came to me through the revelation of Jesus Christ."[85] This evidence points to a significant recentering of images of value and power.

Paul also adopted a new set of master stories and this is amply illustrated by the letter to the Galatians. These are found throughout the letter in such references as, the faith of Abraham;[86] his use of the

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[80]Fowler, _Stages_, p. 281.   [81]Gal. 2:15-16.   [82]Gal. 3:24.

[83]Gal. 3:15.   [84]Gal. 1:16.   [85]Gal. 1:12.   [86]Gal. 3:6-9, 3:15-18.

curse of the Law;[87] the custodian image;[88] the adopted sons;[89] and the children of Hagar and Rachael.[90] These will be discussed in a later assessment of the logic of Paul's Stage 4 thinking. They are evidence of a new set of master stories.

Paul also reshaped his life by participation in a new community of interpretation and action. One of the several descriptions of this new community is found in Chapter 4 which refers to the new community as "sons." "But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons."[91] Fowler's interpretation of conversion enables us to agree with the objection of Betz and Stendahl about the religious group. They have argued that the experience cannot be interpreted as the common meaning of conversion which implies changing "religions." Stendahl reminds us that people in those days did not think about "religions" in this way. It is obvious that Paul remains a Jew even as he fulfills his new role as a missionary to the Gentiles in the name of Christ.[92] Evidence in Galatians does show this strong continuity with the Jewish faith. Paul argues from the Old Testament to prove his points. All references to God in this letter assume the continuity with Judaism. Paul recognizes this continuity as he speaks of his own birth in the statement: "But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and called me through his grace...."[93] He even speaks of "persecuting

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[87]Gal. 3:10-15.   [88]Gal. 3:23-26.   [89]Gal. 4:1-7.   [90]Gal. 4:21-31.

[91]Gal. 4:4-5.   [92]Stendahl, pp. 12-13.   [93]Gal. 1:15.

the church of God"[94] not Christ. Stendahl has correctly recognized this continuity with Judaism. Faith development theory would also recognize the continuity of a new stage of faith with the previous stages. Paul's new community of interpretation and action is described as Jewish Christianity at this point in history according to Stendahl.[95] Yet Paul did switch factions or sect groups within the Jewish religion, and he built the reputation that "He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy."[96]

Fowler also has a classification system about the relationship between conversional change and stage change. He describes six types: (1) stage change without conversion, (2) conversion without stage change, (3) stage change that precipitates conversion, (4) conversion which precipitates stage change, (5) conversional change that goes hand in hand with stage change, and (6) conversion that blocks faith development.[97] Paul's experience would be type (5), "a conversional change that correlates with faith stage change." Faith development theory enables us to agree with the tradition which comes from Luther, that Paul experienced a conversion which involved a recentering of his conscious images of value and power from the Law to Christ, a conscious adoption of new master stories, and a new life in the community of action which was in Christ's name.

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[94]Gal. 1:13.   [95]Stendahl, p. 7.   [96]Gal. 1:23.

[97]This typology has been taken from Fowler and is abreviated. It is found in full form in Fowler, Stages of Faith, p. 287.

The stage change and transition interpretation can also include the interpretation of vocational calling. There is evidence in Galatians to uphold the arguments of Betz and Stendahl that the experience of Paul was a vocational call. This calling was more than the experience on the Damascus Road. The earliest form of a sense of calling is in the phrase, "God...who had set me apart before I was born."[98] Betz[99] and Stendahl[100] both identify this statement of Paul with the prophetic sense of calling shaped by a childhood sense of destiny as expressed by Jeremiah 1:5. The Biblical story of Samuel also comes to mind. A mother dedicated her child to God before birth as an expression of her gratitude for the gift of a child. This would certainly be communicated to the small child and would help shape the child's sense of identity. It could be experienced by the child as "You are going to be somebody important some day." "You are going to be a minister (rabbi) aren't you?"[101] A sense of personal importance is the child's level of experience, which leads to a sense of destiny and importance of identity, as the beginning of a vocational call. This pattern in the life of Paul may have led to the joint parent-child decision that the young fellow should go to the rabbinical school. The Jerusalem school of Gamaliel was the choice made to direct this sense of calling. The Damascus Road experience reformulated the sense of divine calling. "And he called me though his grace, was pleased to

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[98]Gal. 1:15.   [99]Betz, p. 64.   [100]Stendahl, p. 7.

[101]This quotation is reported to have come from my grandfather, a minister, to me, according to my older sister. I do not remember the incident. It illustrates subtle family suggestions that do affect a child's sense of destiny and identity.

reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles...."[102] We marvel at the plan of God that a person so prepared by previous experience in the Hellenistic world was the agent used to carry this Gospel to the non-Jew, and the agent to help break through the wall of Judaism's defensive attitude.

Conversion and vocational calling are not exclusive ways to interpret Paul's religious experience. They are different phases of the same process of faith stage transition. Evidence for both of these can be found in the Galatian letter. If we use the faith stage transition as the basic category for interpreting Paul's experience it can be affirmed that both a conversion and a calling experience were important to Paul and we are not bound up by an argument which must exclude one or the other.

PAUL THE INDIVIDUALIST

Evidence has been found in the letter to the Galatians that Paul went through a faith stage transition. If this faith development interpretation is valid, then the Galatian letter will also show evidence of the next faith stage and Individuative-Reflective thought. A description of Stage 4 thinking has been given in Chapter III. Those characteristics of Stage 4 thinking which have application here have to do with a shift in views about authority, changing patterns of logic, the ability to separate meaning from symbols, and expanded definitions of social grouping. This section will examine Galatians for evidence that Paul's thought

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[102]Gal. 1:15-16.

patterns exhibit these characteristics of Individuative-Reflective think-
ing. They will be discussed under the headings of authority of personal
experience, dichotomizing logic, demythologizing of Jewish traditions,
and new social boundaries.

Authority of Personal Experience

In the model of faith development proposed by Fowler one of the
major dimensions of the research was the "Locus of Authority." As a
person changes from one stage to another the understanding of authority
goes through changes, and the most dramatic of these occurs in the tran-
sition from Stage 3 to Stage 4. Fowler describes "an interruption of
reliance on external authority. The tyranny of the 'they' must be under-
mined. In addition there must be a relocation of authority within the
self."[103] This change from relying on external authority persons to
reliance on one's own judgment and experience is a major shift of think-
ing. Paul was described earlier as a Stage 3 person while under the
training of Gamaliel's school where the authority rested in representa-
tives of the Moses tradition. A variety of schools of rabbinical thought
probably existed in Jerusalem. A graduate or ex-student from a religious
training school would most likely consider the professor of his own
school as the best interpreter of the faith.

In Galatians Paul shows the change of authority from representa-
tives of the Jewish tradition to authority based on his own religious
experience. This is Paul's major argument about the authority of his

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[103]Fowler, Stages, p. 179.

Gospel. When he began to proclaim it he said he "did not receive (it) from man, nor was I taught it."[104] Nor was the brief trip to Jerusalem to see Cephas in order to get authority for his message. "I did not confer with flesh and blood."[105] The authority for what he was preaching in Galatia was his own religious experience and "it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ."[106] This same theme appears elsewhere in the letter to the Galatians - in Paul's argument about living by faith in the Son of God,[107] and in his claim that believers are justified by their own personal faith.[108] Sanders comments: "His authority was independent from highest but human authority of the church."[109]

The standard interpretation of the shift in authority in Paul has put the emphasis on the "revelation of Jesus Christ." Sanders points out that

> He never received (from Jerusalem) a commission authorizing him to set himself up as a teacher of the religion of Jesus. He affirms his entire independence of all human authority or commission and his possession of his gospel is by virtue of divine revelation of Jesus Christ.[110]

The focus of this statement is on that the content of the authority position as revelation in Christ stands in contrast to the tradition of Jewish Law. Faith development calls attention to the nature of this authority shift. The change is away from dependency on others, to reliance on one's own religious experience. It is a shift from conforming to the instruction of parents, teachers, priests, and professors of Gamaliel's school, to reliance to one's own experience and thinking. In

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[104]Gal. 1:12.   [105]Gal. 1:16.   [106]Gal. 1:12.   [107]Gal. 2:30.

[108]Gal. 3:24.   [109]Sanders, p. 181.   [110]Ibid., p. 179.

this change the center or focus of life has changed from Torah to Christ. Paul will even argue the change with these words: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me."[111] Paul makes a very strong case for this shift in the locus of authority and is emphatic that his gospel is based on his own experience with Christ. This change in locus of authority is the strongest piece of evidence that Paul's religious experience was a change from Stage 3 thinking to Stage 4 thinking.

Dichotomizing Logic

The logic which Paul exhibits in Galatians is what Fowler calls "dichotomizing logic" and is characteristic of a Stage 4 person.[112] This is the formal operational logic described by Piaget and it is expresed in terms of dichotomizing patterns. Such logic makes sharp distinctions - "either this or that." "You are either for me or against me." This kind of thinking is normal for a person who is using Individuative-Reflective thinking. Mary Wilcox describes this logic as a "box" of cognitive structure of the individual's newly created mental world. "This world view is constructed by laws, rules, traditions, and sanctions, and anything that threatens to break the sides of the box destroys the entire world view as a system."[113]

Abundant evidence exists in Galatians of this dichotomizing type thought. The sharp contrast between the system of law and the system of grace, or the Gospel, is an often repeated example. The works of the law are under a curse and are opposed to the righteousness of those redeemed

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[111]Gal. 2:20.   [112]Fowler, Stages, p. 244.   [113]Wilcox, p. 122.

by faith in Christ, as this argument appears in 3:10-15 and in 3:21-22.
The position of the son or heir is sharply contrasted to the position of
the slave in 4:1-7. In the allegory of Hagar the slave woman, she is
contrasted to Sarah the free woman in 4:21-31. "So, brethren, we are not
children of the slave but of the free woman."[114] The argument about the
freedom in Christ as against the yoke of slavery to the law in 5:1-11
again expresses this dichotomy. The same type of logic is found in the
comparisons between the ways of the flesh and the ways of the spirit in
5:16-25. All of this logic is evidence that Paul had moved into a
Stage 4 way of thinking when this letter was written. One of the few
comments by Fowler about Paul makes precisely this point: "His early
writings reflect the sharp dichotomies, the concern with inclusion and
exclusion and the passion for authenticity and purity of commitment that
are hallmarks of Stage 4."[115]

Persons who do Stage 4 thinking frequently express the viewpoint
that "you are either for me or against me." Such a person is an ideolog-
ical purist and is not inclined to compromise. They have built the sys-
tem of their world view and do not want anyone to destroy it. This
attitude is expressed by Paul toward the Judaizers who are disturbing the
Galatian churches in 1:6-9. When Cephas came to Antioch and ate with the
Gentile followers of the Way, and then drew back fearing the circumcision
party of James, Paul "opposed him to his face."[116] Earlier he had won
agreement from Cephas for a law-free Gospel in their Jerusalem

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[114]Gal. 4:31.   [115]Fowler, Stages, p. 289.   [116]Gal. 2:11.

conference.[117] Now Paul became very uncompromising. How is it that a person who has rejected the closed-mindedness of the tradition can turn around and be so closed minded himself?

The uncompromising viewpoint seen here in Paul seems to be an embarrassment for some scholars who are apologetic for the "doctrinaire and hard fisted" attitude.[118] The apostle is not only argumentative, but goes so far as to suggest that even an "angel from heaven,"...preaching "a contrary gospel to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed."[119] At another point in the argument, he suggests that his opponents who are the circumcision party should do violence to themselves: "I wish those who unsettle you would mutilate themselves."[120] Again this is an embarrassment to the scholars who pass quickly over these verses. From a developmental point of view this cock-sure attitude is seen as the viewpoint of one who has figured out a new system of thinking and is emotionally defending it against the arguments of persons who represent the viewpoint personally left behind. There is a sense in which this is an argument against one's old self.[121] Fowler has described the strength of Stage 4 as its capacity for critical reflection on identity (self) and outlook (ideology). Its dangers inhere in its strength: "an excessive confidence in the conscious mind and in critical thought and a kind of second narcissism in which the now clearly

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[117]Gal. 2:11.   [118]Backwelder, p. 457.   [119]Gal. 1:8.

[120]Gal. 5:12.

[121]This attitude resembles the reluctance factor described in Chapter I. Persons who have moved to a new way of thinking in Stage 4 will defend it against the views they have left behind in Stage 3.

bounded, reflective self over assimilates 'reality' and the perspective of others into its own world view."[122] This is seen in the sophomore who comes home from college, proud of his own learning, and thinking that his father is backward in thinking. It is seen in the preacher who considers that he or she alone has the truth. Paul was so sure of his own argument that he became offensive in defending it, and was insulting to those who could not see the light as he now saw it. In this he was angrily rejecting his former self. This seems to be a Stage 4 quality in some persons. There is evidence in Galatians that Paul shared this Stage 4 characteristic.

Demythologizing the Tradition

Paul, who once had been a traditionalist,[123] now is able to demythologize the tradition. This is a characteristic of Stage 4 thinking. Fowler says: "Stage 4 typically translates symbols into conceptual meanings. This is a demythologizing stage....It expresses its intuitions of coherence in an ultimate environment in terms of an explicit system of meanings.[124] This involves critical reflection on the symbols and the system of meanings. The meaning can be separated from the symbolic media by a Stage 4 person and translated into propositions, definitions, and conceptual forms.

Chapter 3 of Galatians gives evidence of such thinking by Paul. Several of its arguments have to do with the Old Testament symbol of the

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[122]Fowler, Stages, pp. 182-183.   [123]Gal. 1:14.

[124]Fowler, Stages, p. 182.

"promise of Abraham." Betz comments that the exegetes agree that Paul's arguments in Chapter 3 are extremely difficult to follow.[125] Paul has separated "faith" from "works of the law," and he interprets the concept of faith in terms of his own theology instead of the traditional Jewish meaning.[126] Paul's logic is saying that "faith" is not the faithfulness of one who is righteous by keeping the law, but "faith" is the expression of one who believes in the God who justifies the righteous by grace.

Paul takes the symbol of the "promise of Abraham" and argues for a new meaning. He argues that people of faith are blessed by this promise because Abraham was a man of faith and left an inheritance which was not by the law.[127] He also argues that the law is the custodian of the childhood of our faith in 3:21-24. True faith comes through Jesus Christ.[128] And if we are Christ's then we receive the promise "...then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise."[129] In this argument he has demythologized the traditional meaning of the "promise of Abraham" and has put it into a conceptual system of his own. This is an illustration of Stage 4 thinking.

Another illustration of demythologizing can be seen in Paul's response to the symbol of circumcision. In the account of the incident in Antioch there is reference to the "circumcision party."[130] The attitude of this group toward the symbol of circumcision is Stage 3 kind of thinking. They stress the importance of the symbol itself and the symbol itself has power. "Persons in Stage 3 thinking have a way of

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[125]Betz, p. 141.　[126]Ibid., p. 137.　[127]Gal. 3:15-18.

[128]Gal. 3:24-26.　[129]Gal. 3:27-29.　[130]Gal. 2:13.

relating to the transcendent through symbol and ritual, seeing these as inseparable, related to the realities they symbolize.[131] Paul reported that the leaders in Jerusalem had agreed with him not to require the circumcision of Titus. But the "false brethren," the circumcision party were following him around "spying out Paul's freedom,"[132] to preach among the Gentiles.

A person in Stage 4 is able to separate the symbol from the symbol media and translate it into a concept. The critical reasoning ability of this stage is what makes this possible. Fowler speaks of the symbol becoming broken. When this happens "a certain naive reliance upon and trust in the social power, efficacy, and inherent truth of the symbol...is now interrupted."[133] Evidence can be found in Galatians that Paul has shifted to this kind of Stage 4 thinking. He found himself preaching to the Gentiles and he did not require the step of circumcision of the converts.[134] For Paul this symbol of the law's demand for circumcision was broken of its power. "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is of any avail, but faith working through love."[135] In his conclusion of the letter he summarizes his argument against the Judaizer party who demand circumcision of converts. He claims that they do this, even though they are Christians, in order to escape persecution by the Jews. They demand circumcision "that they may

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[131]Fowler, Stages, p. 164.   [132]Gal. 2:4.

[133]Fowler, Stages, p. 180. See Fowler for an interesting application of this to the symbol of the Eucharist.

[134]Gal. 2:30.   [135]Gal. 5:6.

glory in your flesh,"[136] said Paul. Paul's glory is in the cross of
Christ...."For neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision, but a
new creation."[137] The power of the symbol has been broken and dethroned
for Paul.

New Social Boundaries

Social relationships account for another basic category of
Fowler's measurements that determine the stages of faith. One way we
speak of these in psychological language is in terms of the in-group and
the out-group. Fowler claims that "Stage 3 typically orients to other
groups and classes than its own as though they were merely aggregates of
individuals. It structures social relationships as extensions of per-
sonal relationships."[138] This means that persons are known and valued in
terms of the personal connections with the Conventional thinker of Stage
3. Such a person will include within their circle of concern and accep-
tance folk like themselves and those who are personally known.

In Paul's world it was the legalism of tradition that defined
group life and relationships. Jews were separated from Gentiles by food
laws which prevented sitting down at table and getting acquainted with
other persons. Slaves were separated from free persons by the marks of
economic status and its rituals. Male and female persons were separated
by roles and status as these social boundaries guided the daily interac-
tion of life. Paul personally crossed these boundary lines as he reached
out to the Gentiles with his story of Jesus.

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[136]Gal. 6:13.   [137]Gal. 6:15.   [138]Fowler, Stages, p. 162.

The best statement of Paul's view on social groupings is found in 3:28: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." The interpretation of this verse by Betz explains that many scholars were calling this verse a statement of social and political ideals. "It is significant that Paul makes these statements not as utopian ideals or as ethical demands, but as accomplished fact."[139] He suggests that the statement is not an expression of idealism, but is part of a baptism initiation. Using an interpretation credited to Wayne Meeks he calls these phrases "performance language" of ritual. When one became a member of the tiny Christian cells he or she would have heard the utopian declaration of mankind's unification as a ritual promise.[140]

Fowler points out that a person using Stage 4 thinking has become aware of social systems and institutions and their meaning. People are not merely aggregates of individuals, but "Stage 4 constructs a perspective genuinely aware of social systems and institutions."[141] Paul is well aware of these social groupings and their implications as he writes 3:28. But the boundary of acceptance he speaks of is not the group, nor is it the personal acquaintance across group lines. The boundary line for acceptance is based on belief or ideology. Persons are taken into the circle of acceptance by Paul, not on the basis of ethnic, economic, or gender, but on the basis of ideology - belief in Jesus as Christ. Paul's social acceptance has overcome these normal boundary lines.

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[139]Betz, p. 189. [140]Ibid. [141]Fowler, Stages, p. 179.

Christ has drawn all persons to himself in a new fellowship. Titus was accepted, as a Greek Gentile, not just on a personal basis because he was an attractive person, but because he was a baptized believer. Now all persons who believe and are baptized "have put on Christ."[142] They are within the group "for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith."[143] This has come about through the process of adoption,[144] "so through God you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then an heir."[145] "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."[146] This expresses the overcoming of group boundary lines rather than a statement of idealism. It is the social acceptance of a Stage 4 thinker who is aware of social structures, but gathers people together on the basis of ideology.

Abundant evidence has been found that the apostle Paul was expressing the thought patterns of Stage 4 faith when he wrote the letter to the Galatians. There is evidence of a new basis of authority for his faith. He expressed his faith in dichotomizing logic, and he demythologized the myths and symbols of the tradition. Paul is advocating an Individuative-Reflective faith style as he claims that the old boundaries of Stage 3 faith have been broken and overcome by those who gather under the new ideology of belief in Christ.

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[142]Gal. 3:27.   [143]Gal. 3:26.   [144]Gal. 4:5.   [145]Gal. 4:7.

[146]Gal. 3:28.

CONCLUSIONS

Faith development theory has been presented as a framework for interpreting the Scripture. It has been shown that faith development can be used to account for the religious experience of Paul. The thesis here is that Paul exhibited the characteristics of Stage 3 Synthetic-Conventional faith as a rabbinical student, and that he moved through a transition to a Stage 4 Individuative-Reflective faith style as he became an apostle for Jesus Christ. The letter to the Galatians provides evidence to uphold this view. Paul referred to his Stage 3 thinking as he described his former life in Judaism, his zeal for the tradition, and his attitude toward legalism. He described his transition from Stage 3 to Stage 4 in references to his conversion, his vocational calling, his critical reflective thinking, his leaving home and his sojourn in Arabia. Galatians also gives abundant evidence of the thought patterns of Stage 4 faith as Paul insisted that his authority was based on personal experience, and as he used dichotomizing logic, demythologized the tradition, and defined social boundaries of his new community.

This interpretation leads to the conclusion that the argument of the scholars between a conversion view and a vocational calling view is a false argument for both of these were part of the transition of Paul to an Individuative-Reflective faith style. The classic debate concerning law vs. grace, which continues in the churches, can also be seen in a developmental framework. The condition of law is not necessarily Jewish but it can be Christian. It is a legalistic/conformist orientation and is an expression of Stage 2 faith possibly carried into Stage 3. The

condition of grace is the freedom from such legalism and conformity based on an individual religious experience and a reflective faith style. However, this debate will probably continue to arise with each new generation in the church, because each new generation must go through the development process.

Furthermore, the debates about conversion can be clarified by the use of faith development thinking. Paul's conversion was correlated with his faith stage change, and this contributed to his new faith style. Such was not the case with Sid Amos who had a conversion experience when quite young. According to Fowler's typology Amos experienced Type 6 conversion which blocked his faith stage changes.[147] Amos reported

> ...going down the aisle at the age of six or seven...as an emotional experience, (with) a lot of crying, and doing so because I was scared to death that I wasn't going to heaven...going to be part of this group. This was neither joyful nor positive.[148]

Fowler has commented that early conversion leads to difficulty in breaking out of the conformist faith style. This probably contributed to Sid's difficulty at the time of his breakdown when he was in college.

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[147]Fowler, _Stages_, p. 286. Fowler describes this: "as when a boy or girl of seven to ten is led, in a fundamentalist environment, to a powerful conversion experience that brings assurance of forgiveness and salvation when the child has been convicted of his or her sinfulness and by images of the distructiveness of hell. Such a childhood conversion can lead to what Philip Helfaer has called 'precocious identity formation,' in which the child takes on prematurely the patterns of adult faith modeled in that church. In such cases the growing boy or girl goes through no adolescent identity crisis; and short of an extraordinarily disruptive young adult 'breaking out' of those cast iron images of identity and faith formed in childhood, the person remains in that stage for life."

[148]"The Case of Sid Amos," Chapter III, 8, 9, 10.

This conclusion prompts us to ask the churches to re-examine their use of the call for conversion in the light of faith development thought.

A final conclusion raises the question about the resemblance between Paul's rejection of the law and the previously described reluctance factor. It has been noted that Paul's strenuous arguments against the Law was a rejection of his own previously held faith stage. He was arguing against his old self which now had died.[149] Those who are reluctant to become involved in evangelism are also rejecting a previously held faith style. Sid Amos would not want to be involved in a program of evangelism like what he experienced in his earlier faith stage. In both cases the person is resisting the advocacy of a faith style from which they have been freed. In each case the person is arguing against their old self and their previous point of view.

These conclusions lead to some recommendations for the churches for the use of faith development understanding in their programs of membership recruitment.

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[149]Gal. 2:19.

Chapter VI

IMPLICATIONS FOR MINISTRY

REVIEW AND PURPOSE

The Great Commission of Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20 sent his followers to "make disciples of all nations (people)." Ministry and evangelism have to do with everyone. There is a wide variety of persons in the world. Among the churches there is need for a variety of styles and strategies of evangelism in order to reach out toward these many persons. The focus of this paper has been on the troublesome segment of this larger concern, those who are reluctant to become involved with evangelism. This reluctance was interpreted with faith stage theory and an emphasis on the Stage 3 - Stage 4 transition.

Summary of the Argument.

The implications for ministry begin with a review of the argument of this paper. The paper began by identifying the dilemma of a reluctance factor in the main line churches. This was described as a reluctance to become involved in programs of evangelism advocated by national leaders, as they responded to the membership losses of the 1970's. This dilemma was illustrated from the life of the United Church of Christ, but it may exist in other churches also. Faith development theory was introduced to provide a deeper analysis of the reluctance factor. Special attention focused on the transition between Stage 3 and Stage 4 as illustrated by the case of Sid Amos. Persons who have faith stories like Sid

Amos frequently express a reluctance to become involved in programs of evangelism which support a faith style they have left behind. Faith development was also used as an interpretive framework for the experience of Paul. Paul's conversion and vocational calling were identified as part of the transition from a Stage 3 faith style to a Stage 4 faith style. Evidence for this was found in Galatians where Paul made a strong argument against the faith style of law, which was his own Stage 3 form of faith. He advocated and preached a gospel of freedom in Christ expressed in Stage 4 thinking. Stage 4 persons are inclined to resist their former Stage 3 style of faith. This rejection of an old self is the root of the reluctance factor.

Main line churches, like the United Church of Christ, have in their membership a number of persons who have the characteristics of Stage 4 faith. Some of these, like Sid Amos, came from conservative or evangelical churches. They have turned away from their Stage 3 experience with those churches. They now resist having Stage 3 type programs in their local churches. Sid Amos was never on the Membership Board or Church Council of Tenth Church. Others like him have rejected the programs of evangelism suggested by denominational leaders because these programs were associated with Stage 3 thinking.

Purpose.

The purpose of this Chapter is to suggest practical implications which follow from this analysis of the reluctance factor. These implications will fall into two parts. The first part asks what strategies might be recommended to the main line churches seeking to recruit persons

who are in the Stage 3 - Stage 4 transition. Strategies which might help
a church move toward such a program include: (1) removing the barrier of
reluctance, (2) redefining evangelism, (3) teaching a pilgrim model of
Christian life, (4) telling personal faith stories, (5) emphasizing
reflective church traditions, (6) using Bible study as a tool, and (7)
encouraging dialogue.

The second part of the Chapter asks, does the society around us
have persons who are in the Stage 3 - Stage 4 transition who are candid-
ates for membership? Where are the persons who form the target group for
strategies of Stage 4 recruitment? Considerable evidence can be found
that points to these persons. Some of them are the children of main line
congregations who have gone through the revolving door of church member-
ship and exited as part of their Stage 3 - Stage 4 transition. The
others are persons in the category of the unchurched who are described by
two recent books about unchurched people. These books are The
Unchurched, a sociological study, by J. Russell Hale, and Where Have All
the People Gone by Carl Dudley, who describes "The New Believers."

The conclusion of the Chapter will comment about the implication
of these views for those churches of the main line group other than the
United Church of Christ. These strategies of recruiting involve learning
to trust the Spirit which brings personal growth. An epilogue will state
the personal perspective from which this is written.

STRATEGIES

Every local church and its leaders must deal with their own pro-
gram of membership recruitment in terms of their unique circumstances,

sociological setting and tradition. One of the purposes of this writing is to show how faith development theory can offer insight to help churches redesign their recruitment and evangelism. As a beginning it is recommended that a church include strategies to remove the reluctance, redefine evangelism, teach a pilgrimage model of Christian life, assist the telling of personal faith stories, emphasize reflective church traditions, use the Bible as a tool, and encourage dialogue.

Recognizing the Reluctance

This paper began by identifying a dilemma in the main line churches which was labeled a reluctance to get involved in programs of evangelism. Is this real or a myth? Is this a UCC phenomenon or a main line church problem? In the experience of Tenth Church the reluctance factor showed up in the Membership Board.[1] The presence of reluctance was confirmed by use of a simple questionnaire which showed that many of the board members were reluctant to become involved in evangelism. Further use of a questionnaire approach disclosed a more widespread attitude of reluctance in a wider constituency of churches.

A process to recognize the reluctance is necessary as the first strategy. A step in this strategy involves identifying the reluctance among us, and within us. This can be done by means of a questionnaire

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[1]My second encounter with reluctance came some years ago when I was organizing a new congregation. It was denominational policy that a person from national staff in Evangelism come and conduct a program to train those involved to call on new members. A sophisticated couple who were strong supporters of this infant congregation had great reluctance and declined to take part in this calling program.

which asks questions about attitudes toward leaders, programs and methods associated with the label of evangelism.[2] People need to recognize elements of this reluctance within them and face it honestly.

A second step could be a discussion group to provide opportunity for people to talk about their reluctance. The leader of such a group must avoid judgmental attitudes, encouraging honesty, and inviting everyone to share their views. Why are people reluctant? Who is not? Someone in the group may have had a valuable religious experience in an evangelistic program. Another may have had an unfortuante experience with an evangelist. Others may have had unpleasant encounters with those who are trying to "save" them. Most people have had difficult conversations with religious callers at their door. How do they feel about the evangelistic approaches of other religious groups? How do they feel about the media evangelists? It is important to recognize that reluctance is a protective response which keeps us from being coerced by other religious groups. Therefore, reluctance should not be condemned. The positive value of reluctance can be affirmed.

As part of this discussion the leader can introduce the case of Sid Amos, or others like him. The Stage 3 - Stage 4 transition can be

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[2]This questionnaire consisted of a simple check list, asking people to respond: (a) Positive, (b) Uncertain, or (c) Negative, toward the following items. (1) How do you feel when someone comes to your door and tries to sell you religious literature? (2) How do you feel when you turn on the TV and find Billy Graham preaching? (3) How do you feel when someone says to you, "Brother/Sister, are you saved?" (4) How do you feel when a person says, "We need an evangelism program in our church." (5) How do you feel when a person says, "We'd like you to go make a call on this family to recruit them for the church." Persons are scored on the number of negative responses they have as a measure of reluctance.

introduced to explain Sid's experience. Can people then recognize that at one time they also were literalists and conformists? Can we accept these as part of our own spiritual pilgrimage and acknowledge that they were useful ways of thinking for a time. Paul is a good example of this. He could acknowledge that the law was useful as the custodian of his younger years. Paul did not stay with legalism, nor should we stay with the faith forms of our dependent years. Faith development can help us to see this more clearly. When we understand this about ourselves we can be more positive and not simply react negatively to the conformists and literalists around us. We can also avoid feeling irritated by those who have a coercive style. Our first strategy must turn reluctance into a resource to assist a program of evangelism.

Redefining Evangelism

Having recognized the reluctance, acknowledged its value, and faced some of the problems this creates, the second strategy would involve adopting a new definition of evangelism. It is important for people to deal with the various meanings of the word evangelism and its associations. A process of discussion which arrives at a new understanding is a Stage 4 process. Adopting someone elses' idea, or agreeing with what a leader says may be a conforming Stage 3 style. Chapter II has reviewed the efforts within the United Church of Christ to redefine the meaning of evangelism. Study of these materials may be helpful to any church undertaking this task, and other denominations have similar materials.

Redefining evangelism will involve discussion of the alternatives to this word. It is easy to avoid the word evangelism and the negative attitudes it creates, by adopting some other language, like "church growth," or "membership recruiting." There are people who have made an elaborate program under the label of "church growth."[3] This author has often used the label "membership recruitment" as a substitute for the term evangelism to avoid arousing all the negative feelings people have. The substitution of these or any other terms allows us to continue to avoid the reluctance factor and facing up to why we cannot put up with the style of evangelism used by others. Only when we deal with why we are reluctant, and face the implications in our own faith development, can we turn this rejection of the style of others into a resource to draw people into our churches.

Should we drop the word evangelism because of the negative response? No other word can quite come up with the richness of historical and theological meaning as conveyed by the word evangelism. It would be wise to keep it with a redefinition of meaning. Those who can face their own reluctance and work out a redefinition can then ask: in what kind of evangelism should our church be engaged? Perhaps the central task is not initiating what others are doing, but recruiting persons who have been struggling with the Stage 3 - Stage 4 transition and do not feel welcome in other churches. It is then possible to move toward a

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[3]See Donald McGavaran, and Winfield Arn, Ten Steps to Church Growth (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1977), and other publications from the Church Growth Institute, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA.

much more wholistic definition of evangelism, such as the leaders of the church have been seeking.

Teaching a Pilgrimage Model of Christian Life

The third strategy should certainly be the teaching of faith development as a model for understanding adult life. Experience indicates that this is a valuable tool for thinking about faith, if persons already have a developmental perspective on life. If they have taken courses in education they have been introduced to it by Erik Erikson. Those who have read Kohlberg or Piaget can quickly catch on to Fowler's model. Others may have difficulty grasping this abstract description which is used to interpret the structures of faith. Because of this difficulty it is recommended that the strategy for teaching about faith development be set into a pilgrimage view of life. This can become a foundation block for the church's religious education, pastoral care, and its evangelism.

A pilgrimage view of life, as the phrase is used here, is not an adventure into an unknown land. Nor is it a journey to a sacred place. The term is used to describe a lifelong relationship with the Living God in the sense that John Bunyan used the word in his classic Pilgrim's Progress. A pilgrimage point of view can see the religious roots of an individual, the sociological setting, and economic givens of a particular life. This view recognizes the early stages of childhood training in faith ways and the importance of the development of trust. The patterns of parental influence and the formal religious training in an institution are part of the pilgrimage. The view is aware that we travel life's

journey in the company of others who share with us in community with rituals and sacramental life. The commitment of youth and the special training of adolescents are included in a pilgrimage. Pilgrimage recognizes that some persons stray from religious institutions or move from one to another. Experiences of alienation and reconciliation as well as various cycles and passages of adult life are included. Some of these experiences may be understood in terms of the stages of faith development. A pilgrimage continues on to life's encounters with aging and death. This view can recognize that there are many religious experiences and all of them can be expressions of a relationship with a Living God.

One of the current problems in religious communication comes from the popularizing of the experience of conversion, or being "born again." Fowler has shown that a religious conversion is not the same as a transition in stage development. He illustrates this in the case of Mary's pilgrimage.[4] She had several experiences described as conversions involving changes in loyalty from one group to another. These also involved changes of content of belief, but they could not be described as stage changes in Fowler's understanding of faith-knowing. It has been argued in Chapter V that the religious experience of Paul was a conversion experience and a vocational calling and a stage transition. If life is understood as a pilgrimage, then it can include conversion experiences, sharp turning events, alienations and reconciliations, joining and

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[4]James W. Fowler, Stages of Faith (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981) p. 217.

departing from groups, and stages of faith. Discussion of religious experience need not be limited to the single experience of conversion.

The pilgrimage view of life can be a basic framework to include total life experience. One of the very good ways to teach this perspective on a personal level is the encouragement of journal writing.[5] Faith development as a measure of our faith-knowing can be most effectively taught within this larger framework. This strategy can cover educational and pastoral, as well as evangelical concerns.

Telling Personal Faith Stories

The fourth strategy involves the experience of telling one's own faith story and encountering the story of someone else who has experienced similar pilgrimage events. The story of someone who has traveled through the Stage 3 - Stage 4 transition would encourage another person to traverse that segment of spiritual journey. But persons in main-line churches are reticent to talk about their personal faith.[6] This appears to be a loss of nerve. Is this another expression of the reluctance factor?

It is common in certain church traditions for persons to give personal testimony at meetings in which they tell of their spiritual

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[5]A good guide for this is Ira Progoff, At a Journal Workshop: Basic Text and Guide Using the Intensive Journal Process, (New York: Dialogue House, 1975).

[6]Interesting documentation of this reluctance to tell one's personal story can be found in Jean Haldane, "Religious Pilgrimage" a paper, published by the Alban Institute, Washington, DC, 1975.

experience. The expectation of testimony seems to call for certain kinds of religious experience. What happens when one does not have a dramatic experience to relate? Are people retreating from this by saying, "Religion is a private matter?" Is the refusal to testify an adoption of a middle-class attitude of avoidance of controversy by saying, "We never talk about religion and politics." Does this reluctance have to do with lack of sure answers to faith questions? Is this reluctance an avoidance of coercion associated with the ways that some Stage 3 religious groups do their evangelism? Or is unwillingness to tell one's faith story - a rejection of the Stage 3 tradition which calls for personal testimony? All of these possibilities may be variations of the reluctance factor. A Stage 4 person will avoid the conformity pressures of a Stage 3 faith style. A fourth strategy will provide opportunity for persons to explore this reluctance and deal with the negative attitudes.

There is value for others in persons sharing their story of a Stage 3 - Stage 4 transition. Stage 4 thinking requires the freedom to express one's own personal views. A special condition which encourages this is tolerance of another's viewpoint and a willingness to accept the diversity of religious views. What may be interpreted as a loss of nerve may be the growth of tolerance of diversity. The individualism of Stage 4 seeks places where diversity is tolerated and encouraged. The congregation wishing to encourage people to tell their own faith stories must design a process to assist persons to deal with this part of the reluctance factor. A process like the one used by the UCC in its Faith

Explorations has much with which to be commended.[7] Growth groups, as small discussion groups, can affirm the diversity of religious experience, and encourage persons to tell about their own faith pilgrimage. Coercion should be avoided and confidentiality should be respected. The pilgrimage language can be used, and faith development can be part of their framework of interpretation.

Emphasizing Reflective Church Traditions

The fifth strategy has to do with attracting the attention of persons outside the church with a message which explains what is going on inside. A major way for reaching persons who are in the Stage 3 - Stage 4 transition is to emphasize in public messages those features of the church's life which appeal to Stage 4 thinking. There are a number of features in the historical traditions of the United Church of Christ which can be used to make this appeal. As part of the response to the membership crisis of the 1970's, the UCC blossomed with efforts to strengthen its identity messages. The illustrations which follow have been selected from some of this literature. They will be examined to see how they appeal to Stage 4 thinking to illustrate this strategy.

One appeal of the UCC is its historical position on authority. One of the changes in the Stage 3 - Stage 4 transition is a shift in the way a person conceives of authority. This is a shift from Stage 3 thinking which accepts the conventional authority persons as assigned by the

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[7]"Faith Explorations" pamphlet from Office of Church Life and Leadership, United Church of Christ, New York.

tradition. The shift is toward the Stage 4 thinking which questions such authorities as part of the process of becoming one's own authority. A Church can make clear how it understands religious authority. The UCC inherited the Protestant view that Christ is the sole head of the Church. With that theologicl view they have distinctive ideas about both governance and the doctrines of the church. Roots of the Congregational side of the UCC are in the history of rebellion against ecclesiastical authorities in England, and this bequeaths a "suspicion about all claims to religious authority which others prioritize."[8] This historical movement rejected the form of hierarchy in ecclesiastical government, and emphasized the self-government by the local congregation. This form of polity gave to our foreparents the label "Congregational Churches." In earlier years these churches were described as "self-governing, independent, or free churches."[9] In time this took the form of a statement declaring, "We hold to the autonomy of the local church and its independence from all ecclesiastical authority."[10] This freedom from hierarchy and focus on responsibility at the local church level should appeal to persons of an individuative reflective state of mind.

A second appeal in the UCC to the Stage 4 thinker is in the freedom from authoritative doctrine. Doctrinal statements or creeds are not a test of membership. The Christian tradition within the UCC had a

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[8]Robert Kemper, "A Kind Word for Our Kind of Faith," New Conversations (Fall 1979) IV:2, 41.

[9]"Toward Understanding of Local Church Autonomy," pamphlet (New York: United Church of Christ, 1969).

[10]Ibid., p. 2.

saying that these are "testimonies of faith rather than tests of faith."[11] The UCC can recognize the great creeds, catechisms, and confessions as valuable testimonies of history, to be used for instruction and study. The UCC also values the importance of restating the meaning of the faith in the language of the present. Thus when the UCC was formed in 1957 by a merger of the Congregational-Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church, a Statement of Faith was produced to express the meaning of the faith commonly understood at that historic moment.[12] This statement was an affirmation to be used for worship and study, a testimony, not a doctrine of required belief. In the past twenty-five years there have been two widely accepted revisions of this UCC Statement of Faith to meet issues raised by a call for inclusive language within the church.[13] Another generation may well find other ways to state the meaning of their beliefs in their time. This attitude toward doctrine encourages a person to be reflective about beliefs and this is a Stage 4 attitude.

Protestants have traditionally looked to the Scripture as authority. One classic statement about Scripture in UCC tradition comes from

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[11]"The UCC, Who We Are and What We Believe," pamphlet (New York: United Church of Christ, 1980).

[12]"Statement of Faith of United Church of Christ," in History and Program, United Church of Christ, 2d ed. (New York: United Church, 1974) 36.

[13]The first of these was Robert V. Moss, "Revised Statement of Faith," History and Program, United Church of Christ (New York: United Church, 1978) 40. The second was "Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ," 25th Anniversary Edition, in History and Program, United Church of Christ, 4h ed. (New York: United Church, 1982) 4.

John Robinson's farewell sermon to the Pilgrims before they came to the New World. He said: "There is yet more truth and light to break forth from God's Holy Word."[14] This is understood to mean that all the scholarship, and interpretative possibilities are not yet in. God can continue to use the Scripture to bring new messages to new generations. The study of Scripture in the community of the faithful, using the best available scholarship, allows for differences of interpretation. Authority then exists in the Scripture, read and interpreted by laity and clergy alike, in the fellowship of the church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This kind of viewpoint would appeal to persons who were individualistic in their thinking. Autonomy of local church governance, and freedom of interpretation in matters of belief and Scripture, would appeal to those persons who are moving toward an individualistic style of faith. One UCC preacher lifts up this emphasis by stating: "We believe in the integrity of the individual. We have sufficient faculty, intellect, and spiritual powers to discern these clues (to the mysteries of God) in ourselves, in others, and in our times."[15]

This writer can recall many persons in Congregational and UCC circles who were like Sid Amos and came out of fundamentalist or conservative churches. They had often made a major shift in theology as well as a change in denomination. Some of these persons became prominent church persons. They had made denominational change as part of their

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[14]Gaius G. Atkins and Frederick L. Fagley, History of American Congregationalism (Boston: Pilgrim, 1942) p. 60.

[15]Kemper, p. 39.

Stage 3 - Stage 4 transition. Some told stories of their unhappiness with more authoritarian religious systems. They often had great loyalty to their adopted free church tradition. When the discussions began about the Merger of the Congregational-Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church some of these persons took a strong anti-merger point of view in the debates. Some of them remained with the Continuing Congregational Churches emphasizing local autonomy and freedom. They apparently continued in a strong Stage 4 individualistic faith style.

One of the consequences of this faith style in the UCC is a diversity of viewpoints among the members. This diversity is criticized by those inside and outside the denomination because it appears that there is a lack of unity among the believers. The assumption behind such criticism is not merely that there is strength in unity, but there is strength in conformity of beliefs. This was essentially the argument of Kelley as he upheld the ideal model of church life as consisting of conformity and discipline. This is an assumption of Stage 3 thinking. The freedom which allows reflective and individualistic thinking is not a weakness but a strength for persons of Stage 4 thinking. Such diversity brings richness and variety to the church whose people are gathered on the basis of an ideology which appreciates this diversity. One traditional UCC statement expresses it: "In essentials unity, in non-essentials diversity, in all things charity."[16] A leading denominational

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[16]"The UCC, Who We Are and What We Believe."

writer describes this diversity as "a Beautiful, Heady, Exasperating Mix."[17]

These have been some of the UCC traditions which seem to appeal to the Stage 4 thinking. They are not necessarily unique to the UCC, but many of them are shared by some other main line churches. Each church should search its own tradition. A church which keeps its public messages focused on these kinds of emphases should attract more Stage 4 persons. A leading clergyman points to the importance of this emphasis on reflective church traditions in his words:

> A free church rooted in the Christian tradition may become more attractive in the future. Where are all those evangelical young people going to go when they grow up spiritually? I have a hunch that their religious conceptions may seek fresh air. A liberal church which invites them to join a continuing pilgrimage in faith, with no pat answers but with abiding affirmations, may be an attractive possibility.[18]

Using Bible Study as a Tool

The interpretation of Galatians in Chapter V would suggest that A sixth strategy for dealing with the Stage 3 - Stage 4 transition would be for churches to use Bible study. If the letter to the Galatians was written to share the views of a person who had made this transition it might help others. However, much of the Bible study conducted by the churches does not seem to facilitate this liberating process. Some parts

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[17]Oliver Powell, "The UCC, A Beautiful, Heady, Exasperating Mix," A.D. VII (September 1975) 42f.

[18]Robert Kemper, "The UCC: Can Freedom and Order Live Happily Ever After," Christian Century XCV (May 24, 1978) 565.

of the Scripture do not express the freeing good news found in Galatians.
The methods used in some Bible study do not encourage participation which
is necessary to help persons move toward growth in their faith. These
are illustrated by the case of Sid Amos and the experiences of Peace UCC
Church.

A comment from neighboring Peace UCC illustrates an interesting
attitude toward Bible study. "Our people don't want Bible study," we
were told by a church member. An outsider, from another denomination,
visiting Peach Church reported: "They are afraid of Bible study." Peace
Church is a young UCC congregation in a residential neighborhood. Most
of its members are under 40 years of age. They are inclined to be acti-
vists, theological liberals, and many of them are using Stage 4 thinking.
They are reluctant to do Bible study because most Bible study they have
known or observed has been taught from a Stage 3 perspective. Their
experience with Bible study has been in the form of theological indoctri-
nation. The traditional study pattern begins with a passage of Scripture,
proceeds to commentaries, then to interpretations and life applications.
The deductive logic assumes the authority model of Stage 3. People at
Peace Church may never have had an opportunity to experience Bible study
as an instrument for freeing people from Stage 3 thinking. The reluc-
tance factor is at work again. They are reluctant to become involved in
Bible study, unaware that the right selection of Scripture in appropri-
ately led study could enlighten their dilemma and assist in liberating
them from Stage 3 theology.

In the case of Sid Amos there is evidence to indicate that the
content of Sid's theology in his Stage 3 was Biblical fundamentalism of

the type taught in Alpha Churches. The interview material gives no report that a change of view on Biblical matters was instrumental in Sid's transition. The Biblical view was part of the problem. After his break with the Alpha Church, as he was reworking his theological views, reinterpretation of Scripture was part of the task. He speaks of taking from the library of Ninth Church volume after volume of the Interpreters Bible to read sections he found interesting. He refers also to reading Harry Emerson Fosdick, who was one of the early 20th century champions of liberals against the fundamentalists. He also added: "I have been influenced by books on historical research into the life of Jesus Christ..., one by a Swedish writer Hugo, and the other by a historian who looked at Jesus with a totally secular eye."[19] Sid was reworking his world view and understanding of Scripture and the content of his faith was being shaped by his individuative reflective thinking. He did not report any study group which facilitated this transition. In his case the Scripture was not an instrument for change as much as it was part of the content of the faith which had to be reworked.

The illustrations from Peace Church and the Case of Sid Amos suggest that the matter of how Bible study is used makes a difference. The sixth strategy would involve the right kind of Bible study. Scripture taught by clergy with deductive logic and authoritative style is likely to continue the Stage 3 thinking. Scripture study explored by lay persons in a study group which encourages persons to do their own dialogue with the Word may encourage Stage 4 thinking. If the method used

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[19]From additional commentary by Sid Amos.

encourages individual reflection and allows for diversity of interpretation, then it may facilitate the Stage 3 - Stage 4 transition. It is very possible that a study of Galatians might be used to this end. A clergy person with proper methods could facilitate this. The framework of faith development might be used as an aid to interpretation. The freedom of which the Apostle speaks might break through to those who are seekers as they find Paul speaking to their need to be free from their own experience of law. However, if the reluctance factor makes people resist Bible study, a church might direct these Stage 4 seekers toward theological discussion.[20]

Encouraging Dialogue

Final attention of strategy needs to be given to methods. A Seventh Strategy encourages dialogue with persons who are seeking Stage 4. It is unlikely that persons make the Stage 3 -Stage 4 transition on the basis of mass appeals, since transitions are so much an individual matter. It is unlikely that persons making the Stage 3 - Stage 4 transition would do so when confronted with coercive methods. Stage 4 thinking is less subject to pressures than Stage 3 thinking. The strategy of sending out signals which appeal to Stage 4 has been recommended as a step of method. If this catches a person's attention at the right moment of their personal pilgrimage, the unchurched may respond and be open to dialogue. The church can signal and wait for the occasions when the

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[20]A valuable guide for working out your own theology for Stage 4 adult study is Douglas E. Wingeier, Working Out Your Own Beliefs (Nashville: Abingdon, 1980).

promptings of the Spirit working in the lives of unchurched people move them to enter into dialogue.

When J. Russell Hale did his extensive interviews with the unchurched people he used an unstructured kind of interview. Acting as an observer he neither agreed with them nor condemned them for what they said. He claimed that the unchurched persons communicated to him that "they desperately wanted someone to hear what they had to say."[21] He recommended an approach to the unchurched which is "active listening," a method of shared empathetic communication. "Prior to any readiness to hear the 'good news' is the necessity of the outsider's letting out those feelings that prevent a hearing of the message."[22] Seeking to win a debate or argument, or supplying answers to questions the other is not asking, are common methods of those who are using Stage 3 thinking. Hale found the unchurched folk rejecting these methods. He suggested a flexible approach to unbelievers and a method of open dialogue.

Open dialogue can be a means for clarification, an opportunity for teaching, a means of indicating genuine concern, and a stimulation toward personal growth. It can be an expression of genuine caring about the other person. The method of dialogue can be learned by church people who take seriously the more difficult task of trying to reach persons who are in the Stage 3 - Stage 4 transition. Once the outsiders are attracted to the congregation they can be encouraged to participate in

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[21]J. Russell Hale, The Unchurched (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980) p. 182.

[22]Ibid.

small groups where dialogue about the personal pilgrimage of life is a major focus of attention. Here the sharing of faith journeys can help bring a strong spirit of shared community, and a reconciliation with persons and with God.

THE TARGET GROUP

Are there people outside the churches who compose a target group for a program of evangelism which emphasizes the things described in this study? Sid Amos and his wife, Bell, were out there. Other stories could be told about persons who made a similar shift in faith style because they found their previous church life inadequate. As the conservative and evangelical portion of the population grows there will be others like Sid and Bell who are potential members for the main line churches. The concern expressed here is for those persons whose needs are not being met by Stage 3 church style. In addition to persons like Sid and Bell, the target group consists of those who have gone out the revolving door of membership, those described in a survey of unchurched, and those who could be called "new believers."

Through the Revolving Door

William McKinney, research director for the United Church of Christ describes a "revolving door syndrome" in the UCC membership patterns. In his "Profile of the UCC" he says:

> In a given year we will recruit or bring into membership more people
> from conservative Protestant denominations than we will lose to those

denominations. At the same time we lose even more of our youth through the revolving door into the category of the unchurched.[23]

McKinney is speaking of two patterns. The first, an Entrance Pattern, is the recruiting into the UCC of persons who come from conservative church background. Sid and Bell Amos illustrate this pattern, and show how a Stage 3 - Stage 4 transition may lead a person from a conservative church to a main line church. The second, an Exit Pattern, is the loss of young people from the main line churches into the world of the unchurched. The Stage 3 - Stage 4 transition also contributes to our understanding of this Pattern. The contemporary case of Oscar illustrates the youth who go out through the revolving door.

Oscar was born into a family which had UCC background. Mother was an occasional attender, more interested in the women's group. Father was a scientist who never came near the church. They did believe that their children should have religious training, so Oscar was sent to Sunday School with regularity. When Confirmation time came he was in the class. He accepted Christian Baptism as a believer and made his confession of faith as an adolescent. About this time he was working in the Boy Scouts on the God and Country Award. This badge required a service project, so Oscar volunteered to fold the church bulletins each week for a whole school semester. Oscar was also involved in youth activities through his junior high school years, but when he found his first part time job it interferred with church activities. Oscar's high school

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[23]William McKinney, "Profile of the UCC." A tape-recorded interview in the series Kerygma II. (New York: United Church of Christ, May 1980).

involvements showed that believing in Jesus Christ and participating in the church was less important than acting to help persons by involvement in causes. When he was in college Oscar did not participate in church. When he came home from college he visited with his minister friend about the campus, religion, and vocational interests, but he did not return to to church activity or participation. Because he was in another community in graduate school, Oscar's name was put on the church's in-active membership roll. Oscar married a young woman with similar professional interests. During their busy young adult years of establishing themselves in career and home they did not have time for church. The church had been left behind along with a number of other childhood interests. Oscar had gone out the revolving door, past the Exit sign, and to this date he has given no indication that he is coming back.

Faith development theory suggests that Oscar also went through stages of development. His story is another description of a Stage 3 - Stage 4 transition. Oscar's family would be classified as liberal in theology and world view, yet the process of growing up for the son involved the same stages that Sid Amos experienced in a conservative home. All persons go through similar stages of faith development even though the content of their faith and its style may differ.

This son of a scientist and well educated mother also went through the Mythic-Literal Stage and the Synthetic-Conventional Stage. In early childhood his beliefs and values were held without question because he accepted the teaching of his parents. When Oscar went into the Confirmation Class he was a Stage 3 thinker in tune with the expectations of others. At age 13, in the Confirmation Class, he was beginning

to use abstract thought patterns to explore ideas, systems, and communities. In this he was more advanced in thinking than some of the other class members. Yet for him the matter of authority was still vested in the recognized incumbents of the tradition. He accepted the minister as the authority person in religious matters until he began to question all authority persons.

During high school years he became increasingly involved in social concerns and the current activist movement and did a lot of questioning. The adult style of his home congregation could have encouraged his freedom to think for himself. He did not stay around the church long enough to realize this. His commitment to Christ and His Church, which he promised at Confirmation, was an adolescent expression of conformity. Oscar's campus involvement with activists strengthened his anti-institutional attitudes. Growth toward a reflective faith took Oscar outside of the life of institutional religion. His story illustrates a Stage 3 - Stage 4 transition as a pattern of Exit from the church.

Church leaders may attempt to block this Exit Pattern. Some churches have a style of life which stresses obedience to the authority of church leaders, and conformity to the doctrines of the church. Some churches discourage the questioning, and suggest that doubt is an anthesis of faith. These strategies may keep some of the young people dutiful, obedient and involved in church life. Fowler suggests that a majority of religious institutions in the country operate with Synthetic-Conventional style.[24]

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[24]Fowler, p. 164.

Action to block the Exit Pattern will be interpreted by other youth as an attempt to keep them in the dependency patterns of childhood. Few churches have dared to say to their youth: "You will need to become free from the institutional dependency of your childhood, just as you become free from dependency on your parents." The need for institutional survival makes churches use conformity pressures. Teaching young people to feel guilty about non-attendance will keep Stage 3 persons around, but those in transition toward Stage 4 may be speeded on their way toward the Exit and a half-stage of rebellion.

These youth might come back if, before they get out the Exit, they could have a positive experience of "Searching Faith" within the Church. John Westerhoff's scheme of faith styles is similar to Fowler's, and it offers a helpful way of describing the questioning phase of the Stage 3 - Stage 4 transition. Westerhoff describes this as a "Searching Faith," showing it to be positive and not an negative expression of faith.[25] If there is opportunity for youth to learn this before they get out the Exit door, they may not go far. They may be more open to a more adult understanding of their own faith. These persons are a target group for future return for churches which understand the Stage 3 - Stage 4 transition.

Exited youth may make other ideological commitments and may go for many years with those Stage 4 attachments. Some of them may show up at the church's door again with a new child as the responsibilities of

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[25]John Westerhoff, III, Will Our Children Have Faith? (New York: Seabury, 1976) p. 89f.

parenthood remind them of the importance of religious training. Many church people are waiting and praying for these prodigals to return. If they return it will not be with Stage 3 thinking, so churches need to be prepared to meet them with Stage 4 thought. Some may stay away from church for years and only later with an encounter with suffering or failure, seek to reincorporate religious traditions into a Consolidative Stage 5 faith.

The Unchurched

One of the recent books which describes the unchurched persons in the population is J. Russell Hale's book The Unchurched, with the sub-title, "Who They Are and Why They Stay Away." Hale is a sociologist who conducted research on the unchurched, first with statistics, and then by interviewing in six selected counties in different parts of the country. He gathered a quantity of data on unchurched persons. From this he has constructed a typology of persons who are not related to religious insti-tutions. His list includes persons described as: the Anti-Institution-alists, the Boxed In, the Burned Out, the Floaters, the Hedonists, the Locked Out, the Nomads, the Pilgrims, the Publicans, and the True Believers.[26] In the following paragraphs we apply the analysis of faith development to this typology.

The Anti-institutionalists are defectors from the church because they perceive the churches to be preoccupied with their own self-main-tenance. These persons are critics of the governance, the liturgy, the

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[26]Hale, p. 100.

history, the irrelevance or accommodation, and the finances or property use. They fault the churches for their disunity. Hale describes them as "solitary Christians or unaffiliated fellow travelers" who think of themselves as "better Christians" outside than those who are inside the churches.[27] The key issue in this attitude is the authority of the church and its leadership persons. What we have is persons who are beginning to think for themselves. In the faith development pattern these persons are likely moving into the Stage 3 - Stage 4 transition. They are rebelling against the religion of their childhood, and beginning to move toward Stage 4.

The Boxed In persons have found past church life too confining. They have been members and have left their churches feeling that their lives were controlled and constrained. Some found the ethics or the doctrine too smothering. Others felt stifled in their growth, or treated like children or adolescents. According to Hale, a variety of the Boxed In folk are fierce individualists who want the freedom to do their own thing, and have their own way.[28] These persons could not stand the conformity pressures of Stage 3 church life, for they want the freedom to do their own thing, and have their own way. Such persons, rebelling against institutional authority, may well be in a Stage 3 - Stage 4 transition.

The Burned Out persons described by Hale are ex-members who tell how all thier energies have been consumed by the churches. They feel that they have been used or exploited by religious institutions which were constantly expecting more from them. Some of these persons may now

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[27]Ibid., pp. 119-123. [28]Ibid., pp. 125-129.

maintain an affiliation, but keep a distance from institutional demands. Some of the Burned Out persons have discarded their religious baggage. They may have sought religious institutions while raising their children but now have reached the place in life where they consider religion to be optional.[29] When we consider the faith development pattern, we cannot see clearly whether these persons have moved beyond Stage 3. Some of these may be rebelling against the conformity pressure of churches which believe in disciplined membership. They are like a coach who was reared in a religious high school with a strong pattern of discipline. He now uses the discipline in teaching and coaching, and avoids the disciplines of religion. Such a person is a Stage 3 +, but may not have moved far enough to do the independent thinking of Stage 4.

The Nomads constitute another of Hale's categories. They are truly wandering persons, moving from place to palce, and feeling that they are without a homeland. The find no church in their present community with a semblance of continuity with their past. They feel themselves to be strangers in the present church scene and may speak of fondness to some past relationship. "Their unchurchedness is a function of their nomadism and their minority religious preference."[30] These persons have left home in Fowler's language. They may have developed sufficient executive ego to make them able to live the nomadic life, but their attachment to past religious forms indicates that they have done little rethinking of faith matters. They have been out in the world of pluralism, but have not asked themselves the religious questions. They appear

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[29]Ibid., p. 106.   [30]Ibid., p. 153.

to be Stage 3 thinkers who have become stuck part way through the transition to Stage 4.

Hale describes another type as the true <u>Pilgrim</u>, which is a word he has chosen. These are "on an ideological pilgrimage, searching for satsifying meaning and values."[31] Some want to survey the options before they make a commitment, and they want to keep themselves open to new evidence. They are tolerant of other's opinions and expect to be tolerated by others for their own imperfectly formed beliefs. Their general characteristic is tentativeness, a provisional stance toward ultimate truth.[32] Such persons appear to have already moved into Stage 4, by asserting their own individual authority in beliefs. Their tolerance and desire for tolerance show a move toward a broader definition of social acceptance. Such persons would be prime targets for the appeal of a congregation which focuses on Stage 4 recruiting.

Another label in Hale's typology is <u>Publican</u>. Of those persons he interviewed the largest number of persons were of this type. They see the churches as populated by Pharisees. Publicans call church people "phonies, fakes, and hypocrites" who do not live up to what the church is saying. As they perceive the discrepancy between profession and performance, the Publicans may take one of two stances. One is: "God be merciful to me, a sinner." The other is: "I thank God I am not like them."[33]

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[31]Ibid., p. 106.   [32]Ibid., p. 107.

[33]Edward K. Heininger, "Student Religiosity" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Iowa, 1971). Research shows a significantly higher presence of criticism of hypocrisy among college sophomores or 20 year olds. These are persons who have moved beyond Stage 3.

Criticism of the hypocrisy of others often comes from the transition beyond the conformity of Stage 3.[34] It shows the ability to criticize others and self in an application of critical reflection. Some of these persons may be moving on toward Stage 4, and their Publican stop over may be temporary. Others of them may be stuck in rebellion against their own Stage 3 behavior and the ideas of their tradition. Hale's Publicans resemble the persons Fowler describes in the Stage 3 - Stage 4 transition who have reconceived their values, but do not have enough ego strength to move on to a genuine Stage 4.[35]

True Unbelievers constitute another of Hale's types. They can be described as athiests, diest-rationalists, and secular humanists. They are independent thinkers who have rejected the religious authority of their childhood and adolescence, and they have substituted their own personal philosophy. In the cases cited by Hale they also rejected religious institutions. Some of these may have reached Stage 4 thinking in their faith development by making themselves their own religious authority. They would be unlikely candidates for any church membership.

Hale also has three other types: Floaters, Hedonists, and the Locked Out. The description of these types did not make a faith development assessment possible.

This analysis shows that a good many persons in Hale's interviews have probably rejected the Stage 3 definitions of Church life and the theology and life style of conformity. They probably have also developed an avoidance response to much of what passes for Christian evangelism.

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[34]Fowler, p. 179.   [35]Hale, pp. 160-163.

These descriptions suggest that many of these persons might be open to other approaches by churches which do not recruit with Stage 3 patterns. These persons could be a target group for the churches which have recruitment programs designed to appeal to the Stage 3 - Stage 4 transition.

The New Believers

Another contemporary description of unchurched people comes from Carl Dudley's Where Have All The People Gone? This book is written as a study guide for local church leaders. It's analysis is based on socio-logical research reported in the study by Dean R. Hoge and David A. Roozen, editors, entitled Understanding Church Growth and Decline, 1950-78.[36] After examining the statistics Dudley describes a type of "New Believer" who appears to believe the traditional theological views, but does not belong to the church. "Collected studies show that a great number of people find their religious faith apart from the organized church....The simple fact is, religious belief is not synonymous with church membership."[37]

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[36]Dudley's book is based on the extensive sociological analysis of the membership decline phenomenon by Dean Hoge and David Roozen (eds.) Understanding Church Growth and Decline, 1950-1978 (New York: Pilgrim, 1979). The study reports population summaries by the editors; contextual statistics by Hoge; comparisons of denominations by Ruth Doyle and Sheila Kelly; United Presbyterian study by Wade Roof et al.; United Church of Christ study by William McKinney; social change study by Douglas Walrath; growth research views of C. Peter Wagner, and reflections by James Smylie, Robert Evans, Dean Kelly, Lyle Schaller, and editors.

[37]Carl Dudley, Where Have All Our People Gone? (New York: Pilgrim,1979) p. 11.

The New Believer, like Hale's description, is a typology drawn from sociological analysis. The New Believer, according to Dudley, has the following characteristics: (1) Personal religious experience is paramount and the experience of faith authenticates the existence of the supernatural. These persons understand religious experience to be mediated by nature, rather than by human or institutional resources. They expect religious experience to be perfected in loving relationships. (2) New Believers affirm divine reality with similar characteristics to what church believers use, but with varying theological forms. They have flexible faith, using a wide variety of theological views which mock the old formulas. Some of them may reject traditional faith's pattern of offering freedom from sin. Others would suspend the rules of faith so as to offer freedom to sin. (3) New Believers have a strong inclination toward skepticism, rejecting not only the authority of the church, but the authority of others in the society. The sources from which they draw the content of their faith are not institutional religion, and they are critical of all institutions. In their affiliations they may belong to groups focused on the natural world, ecology, peace, or anti-materialism. They may borrow from oriental piety and inner searching, or turn to support civil religion and its political expressions. (4) New Believers find belonging to a community a frustration, but they also seek it. They have often tried finding fulfillment in communes, collectives, covenant societies, and various movements. These groups are expected not to violate their first principle of personal religious experience. New

Believers may join these for short periods of time, or move from one group to another.[38]

The analysis of faith development looking at Dudley's description of New Believers, points to the rejection of the authority of institutions. Dudley says, "Their faith was born in skepticism and nourished in doubt."[39] This is a characteristic of those in the Stage 3 - Stage 4 transition. This description indicates that these persons may be moving toward individualistic reflection. The variety of theological viewpoints points to a rejection of the conformity of Stage 3. In accepting other persons they have adapted to the pluralism of society by tolerance, which indicates a shift on the measure of social acceptance. They are reluctant to criticize others. They have more open boundaries as they move from one group to another, no longer functioning as conformists of Stage 3. Stage 4 persons seek ideological identity and the movement of New Believers from one community to another may be that searching for an ideological community. Some of these New Believers may be in a transition, some may be rebelling, some may be protesting the establishment, and none of these views is the Synthetic-Conventional attitude of Stage 3. Dudley's New Believers represent another sociological typology which suggests the presence among the unchurched of a number of persons who are in the Stage 3 - Stage 4 transition.

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[38]Ibid., pp. 12-17.   [39]Ibid., p. 15.

Target Group

This chapter has reviewed the persons who can be identified as possible candidates for a church which designs a membership appeal to the Stage 4 thinking person. Hale and Dudley have both reported on a sociological typology which is drawn from information about persons who are outside the churches. They have reported persons who could possibly be described as being in the Stage 3 - Stage 4 transition. To these could be added the church's own youth, described by McKinney, who have gone through the revolving door to Exit by the same Stage 3 - Stage 4 transition. Sid and Bell represent another group, those making their transition from a conservative church background. All these persons have moved away from a Synthtic-Conventional faith style. Fowler reports that the majority of the religious institutions of the country are expressing Stage 3 attitudes and thinking.[40] Will these New Believers, these unchurched, these Exited youth, these folk like Sid and Bell, be attracted to a Stage 3 church? Is it not likely that they will stubbornly resist the evangelistic appeals of a Synthetic-Conventional style? It is possible that they may be open to church appeals which are designed for Stage 4. There seems to be good evidence that there is a target group for the Stage 4 style of evangelism.

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[40]Fowler, p. 179.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion reached by this study is that faith development theory has opened up a greater understanding of the main line church dilemma of loss of membership and evangelism. Faith development enabled the identification of the reluctance of main line church people to become involved in programs of evangelism. This reluctance was not simply a dislike of the language, methods, and theology of the popular evangelists. It was a refusal to get involved in the forms of faith these persons had left behind in their own faith development. Persons who have moved to Stage 4 forms of faith are reluctant to get involved in programs which reflect the Stage 3 ways they have rejected. Knowledge about this reluctance can be harnessed for the benefit of churches which have suffered membership loss. A process of redefining evangelism can result in some new strategies which will assist in recruiting persons who also have made or are making a Stage 3 - Stage 4 transition.

The evangelism which results from this redefinition may be more difficult because it cannot be done by the simple authority or conformity pressures of Stage 3. But church people can learn to dialogue, to share their own faith pilgrimage, and display the Stage 4 characteristics of their congregation. They can become more alert to the passages, personal growth and signs of crisis in the lives of their neighbors which are the openings for change which the Spirit brings to a personal pilgrimage.

The conclusion reached is that there are persons in the society who are being rejected or missed by the evangelical efforts of others who use a Stage 3 evangelistic approach. These include those in

Stage 3 - Stage 4 transition from the conservative churches, those in the same transition who have exited from the main line churches, the New Believers and many persons described as "unchurched." These give ample prospects for those who restructure their evangelism to make it appeal to persons who are moving toward Stage 4 thinking.

It can also be concluded that there is more insight to be gained from the aplication of faith development to the processes of evangelism. The transition from Stage 4 to Stage 5 may also be an occasion of life changing experience which could bring people to the church. Persons who ignore the church for the years of their major career may come back to it when they seek to reintegrate their lives as part of the Stage 4 - Stage 5 transition. Such persons seek to reintegrate the religious interests of their childhood with their adult experience as they move into Stage 5. They are likely to seek out the church on their own for this transition is even less likely to be programmed by churches. Churches are learning that adulthood is not a plateau of steady experience which follows troublesome adolescence and preceeds perplexing old age. Adult life cycles and passages are getting increasing attention from Christian Education leaders.[41] The church's ministry of pastoral care and loving concern for neighbors needs to be alert to this later transition which may open a person's life again to the promptings of the Spirit and to Christian fellowship.

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[41]Kenneth Stokes (ed.), <u>Faith Development in the Adult Life Cycle</u> (New York: Sadlier, 1982).

This paper has focused attention on the special problems of persons who are in the Stage 3 - Stage 4 transition. Any local congregation is likely to find within it adults who are at Stage 3 in their thinking, as Fowler's research has indicated. Any congregation is likely to find adults interested in membership who are quite content with Stage 3 thinking. The emphasis here on the Stage 3 - Stage 4 transition is not intended to suggest that a church should neglect or overlook these persons of Stage 3. A full and sensitive program of evangelism will deal with any person who will respond. A full church program will deal with persons of all ages from birth to death, which includes all possible stages of faith.

Fowler, Wilcox and others who use faith development caution against using this system as a way of pasting labels on persons. "Responsible use does not permit labeling or trying to mold persons to fit into the contours of the model, nor does it justify ignoring other aspects of the personality."[42] When this model from psychology is used, it is also important to stress the theological message: The God, who so loved the world and all its people that a Son was sent, is a God who loves all persons whatever their stage of faith. God loves persons equally in their childhood, youth, maturity, and age. Stages of faith are structures of human understanding and depict differences of styles of thinking, and they do not imply any less or more of the grace and love of God.

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[42]Wilcox, p. 93.

This presentation has drawn most of its illustrations from the United Church of Christ. It was in the UCC that the reluctance factor was experienced and recognized. Denominational leaders will hasten to point out that this reluctance is by no means universal in the UCC. There are clergy and congregations who have made good use of the materials designed by the national offices. Some congregations are quite content with Synthetic-Conventional forms of evangelism. Testimony from our leaders indicates that this diversity in the UCC makes it difficult to organize evangelism for the denomination. Many of the existing UCC program materials focus on sociological matters, communication tools, and motivation. The diversity leads to a neglect of theology and the psychology of religious experience. This situation lays more responsibility on leaders in the local church to adapt programs to their specific situation. As they do this adaptation it may be helpful to explore the insights which come from faith development as applied to evangelism.

Is it only in the UCC that one finds the reluctance factor? Some of the subjects in the West Coast survey were Methodists. They also identified a reluctance factor. Further exploration of this matter might find a good many more reluctant people in other main line churches. More research could gather evidence of this reluctance. If such reluctance is found then these other main line leaders might learn from the application of faith development to their problems of evangelism. They might find assistance in dealing with their youth who are going out the Exit door to be among the unchurched. They might be better prepared to welcome those who come in through a Stage 3 - Stage 4 transition.

EPILOGUE

The writing of this paper has been a personal story as well as an argument of ideas. The reluctance factor which I observed in fellow clergy, in laity of the churches I served, I saw first in myself. I disliked calling on the new people in the first two parishes I served as a minister, so I put off this chore as long as possible. I did not want to be coercive in matters of belief or religious behaviors, just as I did not want others to attempt to coerce me. The lack of my ability to do this calling on new people was a weakness of my ministry. My grandfather had been an Evangelical and a Methodist missionary, fund raiser, and organizer of churches with a life-time record that included a number of conversions to his credit. My father had been a missionary and a pastor. I felt I needed to do something about this weakness. The next job I took was that of organizing a new congregation. This was the expansion decade of the 1950's and the pattern used was standard for these times. My first job was to knock on the doors of strangers in 1,000 homes. I learned fast. Enough people were recruited to organize a new congregation (Congregational) and carry it through its first phase of growth. The personal problem of dealing with newcomers and strangers was behind me.

The problem of the methods and content of evangelism was not behind me. The program known as "Visitation Evangelism" was used in the new church, and it was a matter of "rounding up the strays," to use the language of the cowboys. My experience and theology did not match the evangelists. I had always known myself to be a Christian, to be loved by

God, and never felt I had to be saved from a state of sin. Simple
answers and slogans did not speak to my condition, nor to the people I
knew. Mistakes, failures, injury to others, were part of my life, yes,
but God's mercy and forgiveness took care of these. My most religious
experiences had been in areas of healing and vocational decisions. The
evangelism model as I saw it in others just did not fit. Yet through all
of it I continued to hear the call to "make disciples of all nations."

The membership losses of the 1970's was a problem for my
congregation. This was a dilemma I could not ignore. Nor could I buy
the package programs expressed by the evangelicals. I wrote, read,
listened, searched, talked, and found nothing that seemed to satisfy my
understanding of what was going on with people I knew. Denominational
programs were interesting ideas but none of them seemed to overcome the
reluctance in the congregation. After I had resolved to take a period of
time for special study of this matter I was referred to Life Maps and
introduced to Fowler's thinking. Immediately the door began to open.
The stage theory began to make sense out of so much that I had observed.
Faith development helped me to identify this reluctance factor as some-
thing which was rooted in the experience of development stages. It dis-
closed how Stage 4 persons are reluctant to use forms of religious faith
associated with their own Stage 3 experience which they feel they have
left behind. I began then to find other persons, like Sid and Bell, who
had rejected the theology, language, and methods of the conservative or
evangelical churches. Thus the ideas expressed here began to take shape.
It is my fervent hope that this description of the dilemma may assist
others in finding ways to deal with it.

Faith development study has made me appreciate much more those who work within the Stage 3 framework. The world needs a vast effort of evangelism for persons who think in those patterns and respond to those styles. The public media is filled with an abundance of messages of this style. Each new generation, growing up through a Conventional stage, needs the Good News in terms they can understand. But the people who have rejected that kind of message and that style of church also have needs. Faith development has taught me that there is a structural difference in the pattern of Stage 4 faith. There must be a vast number of persons among the unchurched who have made the Stage 3 - Stage 4 transition and never have found a Christian Fellowship in which they feel comfortable. These are the persons I feel called to seek for Christ and a mission of service for the church and the world. I am learning to trust the promptings of the Spirit who opens their eyes as they encounter the problems and failures of their pilgrimage of life.

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APPENDIX I

The Questionnaire on the Reputation of Evangelism

A questionnaire to explore the reputation of Evangelism was used in two forms. The first form was administered to two groups. Those in the first group were the 18 members of a class entitled, "Theology of Evangelism," at the School of Theology in Claremont, California, during the summer session, 1980. The teacher was Visiting Professor Gabriel Fackre. The second group was a gathering of UCC clergy and laity at an evening lecture program by Dr. Fackre called, "What's Going on in Our Churches." Nine persons responded. The questions were open-ended to solicit their responses.

Form I

In the context of your work or position -

1. What is the reputation of evangelism?
2. Who are the representatives of evangelism most frequently mentioned?
3. What problems does this create for you when you talk about Evangelism?
4. Do you encounter objections to evangelism? If so, please describe:

The second form of the questionnaire was used with members of the Congregational United Church of Christ, Iowa City, Iowa, in a fall retreat in September 1980. Fifteen persons responded. These were also open-ended questions asking for written responses.

Form II

This is an inquiry into your experience with the word "Evangelism." We want you to share your thoughts and observations about your

friends and their thinking.

1. Who are the persons who are considered the current representatives of "Evangelism" in our country?
2. What is the reputation of "Evangelism" among the people you know?
3. What problems does this create if you talk about "Evangelism?"
4. Should we use this word, or should we avoid it?